

A Shadow Over Greyfriars!

A Splendid, Long,
Complete Story of
the Great Cricket
Week at Grey-
friars

By

FRANK RICHARDS

"Beware!" exclaimed Bunter, dramatically.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Danger Ahead!

BILLY BUNTER was sitting in the arm-chair in No. 1 Study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, when Harry Wharton & Co. came in.

No. 1 Study in the Remove did not belong to Billy Bunter, but he looked as if it did!

He was reclining at his ease in the arm-chair, and his feet were resting on another chair. On a third chair at his fat elbow stood a ginger-beer bottle, empty, and a plate upon which a few crumbs of plum cake remained. Billy Bunter had evidently been making himself at home.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him.

The plum cake belonged—or had belonged—to Wharton. The ginger-beer was the property—or had been the property—of Frank Nugent. The study belonged to both of them, but the rights of property never had appealed to Billy Bunter very much.

Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had come along to share the plum cake over a chat. Evidently they had arrived too late for the plum cake, if not for the chat.

Bunter nodded affably to the five juniors, and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"Come in, you fellows!" he said.

"May we come in?" asked Harry Wharton, with deep sarcasm.

"Certainly, old fellow!" Sarcasm was wasted on Billy Bunter. "Trot in, by all means! Jolly glad to see you, in fact!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Nugent, also sarcastic.

"Not at all! I've been waiting for you fellows," said Bunter. "I've something rather important to mention to you. You don't mind my helping myself to the cake? I was rather peckish."

"Not much good our minding, it seems to me!" said Wharton.

"Is that the cake we were coming to interview?" asked Bob Cherry.

"That's it."

"Lucky I brought in my bat!" said Bob thoughtfully. He took a grip on the cane handle of the bat and made a stride towards the fat junior in the arm-chair. "Where will you have it, Bunter?"

"I—I say, you fellows, don't be beasts, you know!" said Bunter. "As I've finished the cake, I'll stand you a new one—a larger one. I suppose to-morrow will do?"

"And where are you going to bag a cake to-morrow?" demanded Johnny Bull. "Has somebody else got one?"

"Oh, really, Bull! I'm going to get it

at the tuck-shop, of course. I'm expecting a postal order to-morrow morning—"

"Squash him!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"In the esteemed circumstances," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the squashfulness ought to be terrific!"

"Your innings, Bob!" said Wharton. "Make it a boundary hit!"

Bob Cherry swung up his bat.

In the twinkling of an eye, Billy Bunter had whipped out of the arm-chair and taken refuge behind it.

"Keep off, Cherry, you beast!" he howled.

"Look here, you fellows, I've got something to say to you; that's why I've been waiting while you've been footling around at the cricket—what you call cricket!"

"What we call cricket?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes; not what I call cricket!" said Bunter. "When I play cricket, I play it, you know—with the accent on the 'play'! I've got something jolly serious to say to you about the cricket week that's coming off soon."

"Come out of that corner!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'm waiting to brain you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Billy Bunter seemed to prefer to keep in the corner behind the high back of the arm-chair.

"You fellows have simply got to listen to me," he said. "In fact, it's an ultimatum!"

"A which?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, lowering the bat in his astonishment.

"An ultimatum!" said Bunter firmly.

"Hitherto I've allowed you fellows practically to keep the cricket in your own hands. I've disdained to push my claims. Although the best junior cricketer at Greyfriars, I've let you fellows keep me in the background!"

"My hat!"

"I think it's pretty generally known," continued Bunter, while the Famous Five blinked at him blankly, "that I've been kept in the shade owing to personal jealousy of my powers as a cricketer—my prowess, as I may say!"

"His prowess!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Bunter's prowess—as a cricketer! My only sainted Aunt Matilda!"

"But the time has come for all that to

stop!" said Bunter. "You can cackle, if you like—"

"Thanks, we will!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," roared Bunter, "but I mean business! Now that there is going to be a cricket week, it's time for all this paltry jealousy to be put aside. I'm not asking to captain the junior eleven—"

"Not!" ejaculated Wharton.

"No. I don't mind saying that I should make a better captain than you, Wharton; but I'm a reasonable chap! I ask simply to be put into the junior team—on my merits."

"My dear owl," said Wharton, "on your merits, you'd be put into a lunatic asylum!"

"I'm accustomed to envy!" said Bunter loftily. "As I've said, I've regarded this sort of thing with disdain—hitherto. Now I'm going to put my foot down! The Head's given leave for a cricket week to be held at Greyfriars, and on such an occasion I intend to insist upon my rights! I'm going to play in the match against Rookwood!"

"By Jove! Are you?"

"Yes; and in the match against St. Jim's!"

"Phew!"

"You'll be glad, afterwards!" said Bunter.

"You can't help being jealous of my powers, but I believe you're not without some patriotism—you'd like to see Greyfriars win all round. Well, with me in the eleven, the result will be a foregone conclusion!"

"It would!" said Bob Cherry, with conviction.

"No doubt about that!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I shall ask my people to come down and see me play," continued Bunter. "A lot of my titled relations will turn up, too. That will give the whole thing a tone, won't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Now, I want you to come down to the facts, Wharton. As cricket captain, it's your duty to play the best man you can get. You're thinking of playing Cherry, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Harry, laughing.

"Well, leave him out, and put me in. It means a century in each of our innings—and

the hat trick once or twice," said Bunter. "I'm as good a bowler as batsman——"

"Quite" agreed Nugent.

"And there's precious few fellows like me in the field——"

"None at all!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"On any other occasion," continued Bunter, "I should disdain to push my claims. But this is rather unique. Tom Merry and Co. are coming over from St. Jim's, and they're staying on here along with the Rookwood fellows. I shall have to come out into the lime-light a bit. My people will expect it of me. My pal D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, will expect to see me in the match. My old friend Jimmy Silyer, of Rookwood, will be disappointed if I don't play. I simply refuse to be passed over on this very unique occasion. I hope I make myself clear, Wharton?"

"Perfectly!" chuckled the captain of the Remove.

"The carefulness is terrific," grinned Hurreet Jamset Ram Singh.

Bunter folded his fat arms across his podgy chest, and fixed his eyes upon the captain of the Remove majestically.

"And now, Wharton, I want your answer!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"That isn't an answer, you fathead!"

Wharton wiped his eyes. The idea of the fat Owl of the Remove figuring in the most important fixture on the Greyfriars list seemed rather too much for him. Bob Cherry leaned on his bat and sobbed.

"Mind, I mean every word I say!" said

Bunter warmly. "Very likely you'll try to keep me out, as usual. Well, I warn you that there'll be trouble if you do. Serious trouble."

"You'll lick us all round?" asked Johnny Bull, with a gurgle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall not deign to thrash you," said Bunter loftily. "You deserve it, but it would be beneath my dignity."

"That's jolly lucky for somebody."

"But if I am excluded from motives of jealousy, as usual," said Bunter, "I shall retaliate! I shall come down heavy!"

"You will, if you come down at all," chuckled Bob. "Fourteen stone, isn't it? —or fifteen?"

"I shall make you squirm," continued Bunter. "I shall muck up your cricket week, and make it a failure——"

"You'd make it a giddy failure if you played cricket for us," said Harry Wharton. "But, otherwise——"

"In fact, I shall crush you!" said Bunter, waving

a fat hand at the hilarious five. "Take warning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

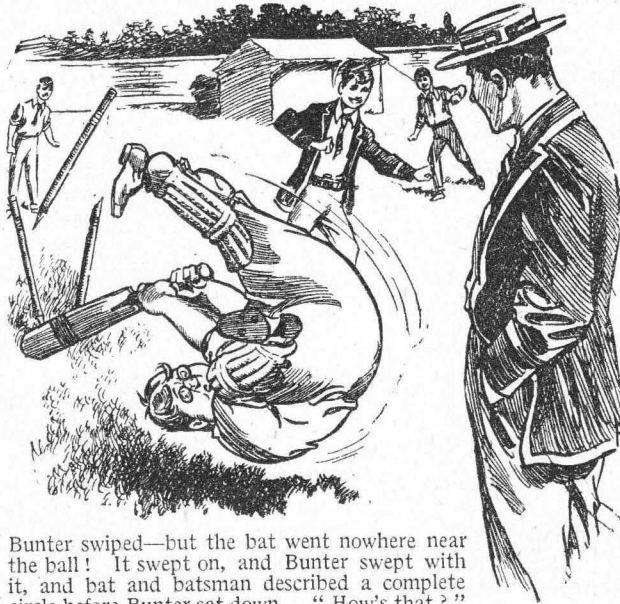
To judge by the roar of laughter that rang through No. 1 Study, the chums of the Remove were not greatly alarmed by Bunter's dire threats.

"Now, what's your answer, Wharton?" demanded Bunter. "Am I playing for Greyfriars in both matches, or not?"

"Ha, ha! Not."

"Look here——"

"When we play St. Jim's at marbles, or



Bunter swiped—but the bat went nowhere near the ball! It swept on, and Bunter swept with it, and bat and batsman described a complete circle before Bunter sat down. "How's that?" chirruped Vernon-Smith. (See page 60)

Rookwood at hop-scotch, I'll think of you, gurgled Wharton. "But so long as it's cricket, Bunty, I'm afraid you will have to blush unseen."

"This rotten envy——"

"The cake's gone," said Bob Cherry, "the ginger-beer's gone. Isn't it time that Bunter was gone, too?"

"High time!" said Frank Nugent.

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry jerked his arm-chair away. Then his bat came into play. It prodded in Bunter's fat ribs, and there was a loud howl from the Owl of the Remove.

"Yoooooop!"

Prod!

Billy Bunter made a rush to the door. The bat prodded him from behind as he went; and Bunter rolled into the passage with a yell.

In the doorway of the study he turned, and shook a fat fist at the yelling five.

"You awful rotters——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I disdain to thrash you——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But beware!"

"Eh?"

Bunter raised an accusing and very fat right hand, and pointed a podgy forefinger at the gasping chums of the Remove. Evidently some recollection of the thrilling incidents of the "pictures" was in Bunter's mind, as he stood in that majestic and denunciatory attitude in the doorway of No. 1 Study.

"Beware!" he exclaimed dramatically.

And he strode away.

He left five juniors behind him sobbing with merriment. Billy Bunter's dramatic denunciation had almost reduced them to hysterics; and not one of the five seemed to realise in the least that there was danger ahead!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Giving Bunter a Chance!

"I SAY, Wingate!"

Wingate of the Sixth, captain of Greyfriars, glanced down at Billy Bunter, and smiled.

It was the afternoon of the day following the important interview in No. 1 Study, in

which Bunter's services as a cricketer had been so ungratefully declined by the Remove skipper.

Harry Wharton and Co. were busy on Little Side, at cricket practice. Wharton was keeping his men well up to the mark, in view of the important engagements ahead. And it is much to be feared that the Remove cricketers had forgotten all about Billy Bunter and his claims.

But Bunter had not forgotten. Bunter was very much in earnest. Bunter was determined that somehow, by hook or by crook, he was going to cut an imposing figure in the Greyfriars Cricket Week.

Such an opportunity for getting into the limelight was rare. Such a distinguished crowd of visitors were seldom gathered at Greyfriars. On such an occasion Bunter yearned to distinguish himself. In his mind's eye he saw himself swiping away the ball to the boundary, over and over again. In his mind's eye, he saw himself performing the double hat trick. In his mind's eye, he saw himself in the field, making wonderful catches, and spreading terror and dismay in the ranks of Rookwood and St. Jim's.

Bunter was not likely to see all this with any other eye than the mind's eye. But with his mind's eye he saw it all clearly and convincingly.

For once Bunter was not to be trifled with. Bunter meant business. So he was now addressing Wingate, captain of the school and head of the games. Wingate was the man to see him righted, if anybody would or could.

Wingate smiled. He looked down on the fat, podgy Removite, and couldn't help smiling. Bunter was in flannels, which seemed on the point of bursting, and he had a bat under one plump arm. And he had a frown of wrath and indignation on his fat face.

"I say, Wingate!" he repeated.

"Well," said the Greyfriars captain, good humouredly, "what is it, Bunter?"

"You're head of the games, Wingate. I want you to see justice done," said Bunter, impressively.

"That's my job," agreed Wingate. "What's up?"

Bunter jerked a fat thumb towards the

junior cricket ground, where the Removites were at practice.

"You see that crowd?" he asked.

"Yes."

"They've left me out."

"Oh!" said Wingate.

"You mayn't have noticed, personally, what a first-rate cricketer I am, Wingate."

"I can't say I've ever noticed it," agreed the Greyfriars captain.

"Well, whether you've noticed it or not, it's the fact. I'm not bragging," said Bunter. "I'm not the sort of fellow to swank, I hope. But that's how it is. There's a lot of jealousy in cricket matters in my form. As a rule, I disdain to take notice of it. But this time I'm standing up for my rights. I want you to see fair play."

Wingate looked rather puzzled.

"That's for Wharton——" he began.

"That's just where the shoe pinches," explained Bunter. "Wharton's jealous of my form, and he hates the idea of being put in the shade. I'm excluded from the Remove eleven for that reason. And—would you believe it—I've just gone down to practice, just to show them what I can do—and Bob Cherry chased me off the ground with his bat! He said they couldn't be bothered when they were getting ready for the St. Jim's match. I'm entitled to practice with the Remove, ain't I?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, that's what I want," said Bunter.

"Once I get a chance of showing all the fellows what I can do, Wharton won't be able to keep me out. I'm at the top of my form to-day. I could convince the Remove that they can't afford to leave me out. And they won't let me start. I want you to see that I have a chance, Wingate. As head of the games, you know——"

Wingate pursed his lips.

"Well, as Wharton's pretty busy now——" he began.

"You see, they're getting ready for the St. Jim's match next week," said Bunter. "That's why it's important for me to show what I can do. Wharton will have to put me in the eleven, if the fellows demand it. And they will—when they see me in really great form.

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 3.—BOXING



The gym. is packed from end to end,
The boxers take their places;
Friend whispers eagerly to friend,
And tense are all the faces.
The referee now clears the ring,
Some wise advice imparting:
Supporters dance a Highland fling—
The boxing bout is starting!

They crouch like greyhounds in the slips,
And take each other's measure;
Determination stamps their lips,
They've little time for leisure.
First blow is struck; a mighty shout
Goes up from roof to ceiling;
Then a responsive fist shoots out,
And see! the victim's reeling!

Though partly dazed, he does not fall,
But pulls himself together;
Yet, though the damage done is small,
Fresh blows he has to weather.
They rain upon his face and chest
(To thrill the crowd is treated),
Until he gives his rival best
And owns himself defeated!

The noble art of self-defence
Should never find us lacking;
And every boy of common sense
Will draw the line at slacking.
Great boxing prowess he will seek,
That he may thus be ready
To face the strong and shield the weak
In manner brave and steady!

"I'm willing to stand or fall by my merits!" added Bunter, loftily.

"Come along!" said Wingate.

He started for Little Side, and Billy Bunter trotted off with him, greatly elated. His fat little legs had to go like clockwork to keep pace with the strides of the big Sixth-former.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Here's that fat bluebottle buzzing along again. What does Wingate want, I wonder?"

"Wharton!" called out the Greyfriars captain.

Wharton came towards him.

"Yes, Wingate?"

"Bunter tells me that he is excluded from the practice, and that he wants to show his form, with the idea of being put in your eleven for the matches next week."

"Just that!" chirped Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed, and then frowned. "We're rather busy now, Wingate," he said. "There isn't much time to waste on Bunter. He doesn't know one end of the bat from the other."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Well, suppose you give him a few minutes," suggested Wingate. "Bunter may have developed some unexpected form. If he can't play, it won't take him long to show it. Give him a chance."

"Anything you like, Wingate."

"I'll look on and see how he shapes," said the Greyfriars captain. "I'll tell you whether you're in eleven form, Bunter."

"Thanks, awfully, Wingate. You've only got to see me at the wicket," said Bunter, confidently.

"Right-ho," said Wharton. "Get to the wicket, Bunter. Smithy, you take the ball."

"I'm your man!" grinned Vernon-Smith. The Bounder of Greyfriars caught the ball Wharton tossed to him, and went along to the bowler's end.

The junior cricketers gathered round, with grinning faces. They had seen Bunter at cricket before, and they were looking for an entertainment. George Wingate, as a matter of fact, knew Bunter's play as well as they did; but perhaps there was a remote possibility that the Owl of the Remove had

developed some new and unexpected powers. Anyhow, Billy Bunter was going to have his chance to show what he could do.

The fat junior took up his position at the wicket, with an exaggerated straddle, and blinked along the pitch.

"Ready?" chortled Vernon-Smith.

"Waiting!" snapped Bunter.

The ball came down. It looked quite an easy ball—easy enough for even Bunter to play. And Bunter swiped at it confidently, fully expecting to send it right over the tops of the elm trees in the distance.

It was rather unfortunate that Bunter put so much force into that swipe. For the bat went nowhere near the ball, and as it met with no resistance, it swept on, and Bunter swept with it, and bat and batsman described a complete circle, before Bunter sat down.

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the cricketers.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bunter.

"How's that?" chirruped Vernon-Smith.

Bunter blinked at the wicket. The middle stump was out, and the bails were down.

"Out!" chortled Bob Cherry. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh added that the outfulness was terrific.

"Is that a new style in batting, Bunter?" inquired Wingate.

Bunter scrambled up breathlessly.

"I—I—I wasn't—my foot slipped," he gasped. "Besides, that was only a trial ball, wasn't it? Give a chap a chance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him another, Smithy," said Wharton laughing. Peter Todd tossed back the ball to the Bounder, who prepared to bowl again.

"Give him a whole over," said Wingate.

"Right-ho."

Smithy sent down the ball again, and this time Bunter played it more carefully. He did not swipe so recklessly; and he did not sit down on the crease. That was so much to the good. But it booted not, as a novelist would say. His middle stump was jerked out of the ground.

Bunter blinked at the toothless-locking wicket in great surprise.

"Just try that again!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"



The ball flew from Bunter's fat fingers with terrific vim. For a second it was not clear where it had gone. Then a fiendish yell from Wingate of the Sixth announced where it was! (See page 62)

Vernon-Smith tried again. He finished the over, and with every ball the wicket went down. It was the double hat trick, if that had been worth anything in the circumstances.

The whole field was yelling with laughter, and Wingate was grinning. Billy Bunter gave a wrathful blink round.

"Well, are you satisfied now, Bunter?" asked the Greyfriars captain. "You don't expect Wharton to put up a batsman like that against St. Jim's, do you?"

"The—the fact is——" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It puts a fellow off his form to have a lot of goats cackling round him," said Bunter warmly. "Besides, I'm greatest on bowling. As a rule, my batting is the best in the Remove. But bowling is my strong point. I want you to see me bowl, Wingate."

"Give him the ball!" said Wingate resignedly.

"The bowl-fulness will be terrific," murmured Hurree Singh. "I am going to put my esteemed and valuable self out of danger."

And the Nabob of Bhanipur prudently retired into the pavilion.

There was a general backing away as Billy Bunter grasped the round red ball. The Removites knew their Bunter. Squiff took the bat, and he looked cheery and confident enough at the wicket. There was no danger of the ball getting there. But there really was no telling in what other direction it might or might not go; and the Removites wisely ran no risks. Bunter had a clear field, save for the batsman and the captain of Greyfriars, who stood looking on with his hands in his pockets.

Bunter was very careful. He realised that a lot depended on his prowess now. Even Bunter had to admit that his batting had not been exactly brilliant. But he hoped to save

his bacon by his wonderful bowling; he was prepared to witch the world with noble bowling, as it were. A succession of wrecked wickets would see him safely through.

He retired, grasping the ball, and took a little run, and then turned himself into a fat imitation of a Catherine-wheel. And the ball flew from his fat fingers with terrific vim.

Squiff, at the wicket, kept his eyes open, lest by some unexpected chance the ball should come that way. But there was no need for that. For a second, it was not clear where the ball had gone. Then a fiendish yell from Wingate of the Sixth announced where it was.

“Yarooooop!”

The next moment the captain of Greyfriars seemed to be executing a wild impromptu jazz.

Both his hands were clasped to his head, and he fairly danced with anguish. Bunter blinked at him, and the whole field burst into a frantic yell.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, dear!” gasped Bob Cherry, throwing himself into the grass, and kicking up his heels in ecstasy. “Wingate’s got it! He knows how Bunter bowls now.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I—I say, you fellows, where’s that ball?” gasped Bunter. “Why don’t you field that ball? Is it a bye?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Look out, Bunter!” yelled Peter Todd.

Wingate suddenly unclasping his damaged head, made a rush towards the astonished bowler.

Bunter blinked at him, for one moment—not for two! He had brought Wingate there to see fair play—and to see him bat and bowl. Wingate had seen him bat—and felt him bowl! Now he looked as if he were going to slaughter Bunter on the spot—and Bunter did not stop to argue the point. He spun round and fled for his life.

“Stop, you young villain!” roared Wingate. “I’ll teach you to chuck a cricket ball at my head! Stop! I’ll—I’ll—I’ll——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, crumbs!” gasped Bunter.

Bly Bunter was not a bright youth. But

he was much too bright to stop just then. He ran for his very life.

There was a wild yell of laughter on the junior cricket ground. Bunter and Wingate disappeared through the elms, the Owl of the Remove putting on a speed that was really amazing. And it was five minutes, at least, before Harry Wharton and Co. could sufficiently restrain their feelings to get on with the cricket. Then they got on with it—without Bunter.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Not Bunter’s Lucky Day!

“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”

“What the thump——”

The Famous Five of the Remove, coming in ruddy and cheery from the cricket, met with a surprise.

William George Bunter stood before them; and the attitude of William George Bunter was striking.

The fat junior looked at the chums of the Remove, with a lofty and scornful glance. They stared at him. Bunter’s big spectacles fixed on their astonished faces first, and then his glance travelled down to their feet. From their feet it travelled slowly up again to their astonished faces.

This was what Bunter called “looking them up and down.” It expressed the most withering contempt and scorn.

Properly speaking, the Famous Five should have been withered on the spot. They should have hung their heads with abasement.

But they didn’t. They stared at Bunter, as if not quite understanding the meaning of his peculiar performance.

“Anything the matter with you, Bunter?” asked Bob Cherry. “Are you ill, old bird? Are you potty? Has your feeble brain given away at last?”

“Yah!” snapped Bunter.

“Well, what are you grimacing for?” demanded Johnny Bull.

Bunter snorted. It wasn’t much good looking fellows up and down with biting scorn, if they only supposed that he was grimacing.

“I wasn’t grimacing, you silly owl!” he snapped.

"The grimacefulness was terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"I was trying to make you understand that I despise you!" said Bunter cuttingly.

"Ha, ha, ha! You weren't trying to startle us into a fit?" asked Bob.

"No, you ass!"

"Then, for goodness' sake, don't make weird faces like that any more."

"Yah!"

The Famous Five grinned and passed on their way. They seemed quite impervious to Bunter's scorn. The Eastern proverb says that contempt will pierce even the shell of the tortoise. But Bunter's contempt seemed perfectly innocuous.

"I say, you fellows," hooted Bunter, rolling after the Co., "I've got just a word to say to you."

"Buzz off and say it to somebody else," suggested Nugent. "You're a bore, old chap."

"A terrific bore, my esteemed, idiotic Bunter," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I'm fed up with you," said Bunter, unheeding. "It's pretty plain now that I'm not going to have a chance in the cricket. Even Wingate—captain of the school as he is—is jealous of my form."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Pretty rotten, isn't it?" said Bunter bitterly. "Even the Sixth are jealous of me now."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I shall refuse to play for Greyfriars in the cricket week," said Bunter. "If Tom Merry or Jimmy Silver asks me how it is I'm not playing, I shall tell him the facts."

"You'll tell him you're a born idiot?" asked Bob. "My dear chap, no need to tell them—they know it."

"But don't you fellows think that you'll keep me out of the cricket week and show off your feeble cricket," said Bunter. "I'm going to put a spoke in your wheel. I'm going to come down heavy on you. I decline to allow the proceedings to—proceed."

"Roll away, old barrel," said Bob Cherry kindly.

"Beware!" said Bunter darkly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wait," said Bunter, with the same dark mysteriousness. "You'll see what you will see!"

The chums of the Remove chuckled and went up the staircase. Billy Bunter stood and looked after them in an attitude of lofty scorn. There were deep, dark thoughts working in Bunter's fat brain. He felt that his uncommon injuries and grievances demanded vengeance. When he rolled into No. 7 Study to tea, there was the same dark frown on his fat brow. Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, was in the study, making toast. Peter Todd was gone to the tuck-shop for supplies for tea.

"Anything up?" asked Dutton, noting Bunter's frowning brow.

"I'm going to make 'em squirm," said Bunter.

Dutton raised his eyebrows.

"Who's a worm?" he asked.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Bunter. He was not in a mood to be bothered by Dutton's affliction.

"Moke?" said Dutton. "Did you say moke or joke? If you're calling me a moke, you fat chump—"

"Oh, give us a rest!" said Bunter crossly. "You're enough to tire a fellow out."

Dutton jumped up.

"You think I'm deaf, but I heard that plain enough," he said. "So I'm a lout, am I? What are you calling me a moke and a lout for?"

"I—I didn't. I said——"

"Eh?"

"I never said anything of the kind," howled Bunter.

"Out of my mind, eh? I'll show you whether I'm out of my mind," exclaimed the deaf junior angrily. "What have I done to you, you fat bounder? You come in here scowling, and call me a moke and a lout, and say I'm out of my mind! I'll——"

"I—I say——" Bunter jumped back as Tom Dutton made a rush at him. "I—I say—keep off—I—I——"

Bunter dodged out of the study in a hurry. It was sheer ill-luck that Peter Todd arrived at that moment in the study doorway, with a bundle under one arm, and a bag of eggs in

the other hand. Billy Bunter crashed into him backwards.

Smash!

There was a howl from Todd as the bag of eggs went to the floor.

"You silly owl!"

"Oh, dear! I—I say, Peter—yaroooooh!"

"You've smashed up two bob's worth of eggs!" shrieked Peter Todd.

"I—I—yaroooh!"

Peter Todd was exasperated. He caught up the bag of broken eggs, and jammed it on Bunter's head. Peter regarded that as making the punishment fit the crime.

"Grooooooogh!"

"You can have the lot!" gasped Peter Todd. "Perhaps you'll look where you're going next time."

"Ooooooooooch!"

Billy Bunter gouged at the eggs that were streaming down his fat face, and made a rush for the nearest bathroom.

When he came back, newly swept and garnished, so to speak, tea was over in No. 7 Study. Bunter blinked round the study wrathfully.

"Where's my tea?" he demanded.

"You've had all the eggs," said Peter.

"That was more than your whack."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study, in search of tea in another quarter. He looked into No. 11, where he found Skinner and Snoop and Stott. Skinner smiled at him and picked up a loaf.

"You've come to tea, Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes, old chap."

"Where will you have it?" inquired Skinner, poisoning the loaf in the air.

Bunter dodged into the passage.

"I say, Skinner, old chap—"

"I hear you've been distinguishing yourself on the cricket ground," grinned Skinner. "I heard Coker of the Fifth say you nearly brained Wingate."

"Wingate got in the way of the ball. He doesn't know much about cricket."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've declined to play for the Remove eleven now," said Bunter. "I say, I'll come in to tea, Skinner, and stand you a ripping

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 4.—ROWING



The River Sark flows swift and cool
Through wood and copse and bracken;
Oarsmen are there, from Greyfriars School,
Their efforts never slacken.
See how, with strong and sturdy strokes,
They carry all before them!
What frantic cheering it provokes!
And who can but adore them?

The rival crews speed side by side,
Each keenly bent on winning;
Then shouts re-echo far and wide,
Caps in the air are spinning.
The goal is gained; the winning Eight
Attains its proud ambition;
Resolved that no one, soon or late,
Shall capture its position!

Great is the banqueting that night!
The crews, with ruddy faces,
Discuss that stern and hard-fought fight,
That thrilling race of races!
The toasts are drunk with one accord,
Long life and health denoting
To all who, at that festive board,
Enjoy the thrills of boating!

This exercise must surely rank
With football and with cricket;
It is no senseless sport or prank,
One needs strong will to stick it.
It calls for stamina and grit
And heaps of grim endurance;
Yes, rowing, as a sport, is IT;
Such is our firm assurance!

feed in my study to-morrow. I'm expecting a postal order by the first post in the morning."

"The same one you were expecting when we were in the Third Form?" asked Skinner, agreeably.

"Oh, really, Skinner! I say, that looks a nice cake."

"It is a nice cake!" agreed Skinner. "Trot in, old fellow. I think I could get you fairly on the boko with this loaf."

Bunter remained in the passage. He was rather keen on the cake; but evidently he did not want the loaf—not on his fat "boko."

"Why don't you offer your services to the Fourth?" continued Skinner, in a humorous vein. "The Fourth Form eleven is playing St. Jim's when they're here next week; and Temple would jump at the chance—with both feet."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott.

Bunter started. Skinner had made the suggestion in a humorous mood, but it struck Bunter quite seriously.

"Blessed if I don't!" exclaimed Bunter.

"Oh, do!" said Skinner chuckling.

"I'm going to—and Wharton will look a bit sick next week, when he sees me bagging centuries for the Fourth——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, full of that new idea, leaving Skinner and Co. roaring.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Declined—Without Thanks!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE, the captain of the Greyfriars Fourth, was seated at his study table, with Fry and Dabney, at tea. Cecil Reginald looked his usual elegant and nutty self, and there was a look of serene satisfaction on his face. Cecil Reginald was, in fact, in rather high feather these days. He was looking forward to a great time in the Greyfriars Cricket Week, when he was going to distinguish himself. He was holding forth on the subject now, at tea with his chums.

"You see, this is where we come in strong!" Temple told Dabney and Fry. "Properly speaking, the Remove club ought not to bag any outside fixtures at all. We're the junior club of Greyfriars——"

"We are!" agreed Fry.

"Oh, rather," said Dabney. "Pass the cake, old chap."

Temple passed the cake and resumed.

"Wharton's crowd have simply butted in, you know, and made out that they're a team—but they aren't. I don't say they can't play cricket—after a fashion——"

"After a fashion——" agreed Fry.

"They've even beaten us sometimes——"

"They have."

"But properly speaking, it's us that ought to bag outside fixtures, not that crowd of Remove fags," said Temple. "I've thought a good many times that they ought to be put in their place. Well, this time I fancy it's goin' to happen. This cricket week is a jolly good idea. St. Jim's and Rookwood are goin' to play the Remove and play us. Now, I haven't the faintest shadow of doubt that they'll walk all over the Remove."

"Oh, rather."

"But we," said Temple placidly, "we shall beat them. We're goin' to beat them hollow. I shall make a special point of it. What are you grinnin' at, Fry?"

"Was I—I grinning?" asked Fry.

"If you don't think we can beat St. Jim's and Rookwood, Fry——"

"Of course we can, old top—with you captain' us!" said Fry pacifically.

Cecil Reginald's brow cleared, and he nodded.

"That's it," he agreed. "What a cricket team needs is a really good skipper, to hold it together, you know. Goin' in first, I shall encourage the chaps by knockin' up about ninety. That's my idea."

"Jolly good idea, if it comes off," said Fry.

"If you don't think it will come off, Edward Fry——"

"Of course I do, old bean. Practical certainty!" said Fry, winking into his teacup.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "I say, this is jolly good cake."

"We shall have a really good chance," continued Temple. "'Tain't often a junior team has a chance of a two-day match. Now, when St. Jim's and Rookwood have beaten the Remove hollow, and we've beaten St. Jim's and Rookwood hollow, I think we shall have



“I’ll put a spoke in their wheel!” chuckled the short-sighted Owl of the Remove. “Hallo, is that Rookwood?” “You fat rascal!” roared Wharton. (See page 169)

proved pretty clearly to all Greyfriars what our real standin’ is.”

“When!” murmured Fry.

“What did you say, Fry?”

“Nothin’, old chap. Barge on.”

“After that, the Remove can scarcely do less than retire gracefully into a back seat,” said Temple. “Wharton didn’t quite realise what he was doin’ for himself when he fixed up this cricket week, and got the Head to agree. He was practically arrangin’ to give his own club the kybosh.”

“Certainly he couldn’t have realised that!” murmured Fry. “Let’s hope it will come off.”

“Not much doubt about that! We’re goin’ to make it a point of winnin’ both matches,” said Temple, confidently. “I’ve been stickin’ to practice no end! I’m in great form now. You fellows have noticed that?”

“Oh, rather,” said Dabney, his usual remark.

“Haven’t you noticed it, Fry?” demanded Temple, as that youth did not speak.

Temple of the Fourth was a wealthy and well-connected youth, and a great nut, and quite a big gun in the Fourth Form. And he was accustomed to admiration from an admiring circle. But Fry did not always play up, as it were.

“Oh! Yes! Of course!” said Fry. “I wonder somebody don’t come along and bag you for the county, Temple.”

Cecil Reginald looked at him a little suspiciously. But Fry was quite grave.

“Stranger things than that have happened,” said Temple, a little stiffly. “If you’re tryin’ to pull my leg, Fry—Hallo, what does that blinkin’ porpoise want?”

The fat face and big spectacles of William

George Bunter, of the Remove, blinked in at the doorway.

Temple raised an elegant hand.

"Cut!" he said briefly.

Instead of cutting, Bunter rolled into the study. He bestowed an ingratiating smile on the three Fourth-formers.

"Hallo, Temple, old fellow," he said affably. "I haven't really come to tea, but if you insist——"

"Kick him, somebody," said Temple.

"Oh, really, Temple——"

"We don't have Remove fags to tea in the Fourth!" said Temple, with lofty superiority.

"I've come to talk cricket," said Bunter, with a longing glance at the cake. "I've declined to play for the Remove, Temple."

"Go hon!" said Cecil Reginald, sarcastically.

"It's a fact," said Bunter. "Wharton begged me almost with tears in his eyes. But I felt bound to refuse. I've never been treated in a proper way by those fellows; and now they want me for important matches, I decline to be made use of. I think I'm justified."

Temple and Co. stared at Billy Bunter.

"That's how the matter stands," continued Bunter. "But the fact is, old fellow, I'd rather care to play in the cricket week—a lot of my titled relations will be coming down to Greyfriars, and they'll expect to see me play. Having declined to play for the Remove, I've decided to offer my services to the Fourth."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"My hat!"

"Surprises you a bit, what?" smiled Bunter. "But that's what I've decided to do. Of course, 'tain't usual for a Remove chap to play for the Fourth. But on a special occasion, you'd be justified in borrowing a specially good man from another Form. What?"

"A—a—a specially good man?" said Temple dazedly. "Oh, my only Aunt Sempronias!"

Bunter nodded cheerily.

"So that's that!" he said. "If you've made up your eleven, Temple, you can leave out any man you like to make room for me. Dabney, for instance——"

"What?" ejaculated Dabney.

"Dab's not much good," said Bunter. "He will admit that."

"Why, you—you—you——" stammered Dabney.

"Or Fry!" said Bunter cheerily. "Fry's cricket is really enough to make a cat laugh, ain't it, Fry?"

Fry did not answer; he only stared at Bunter, with a stare of gathering fury.

"If you'd like me to captain the team," went on Bunter, encouraged by the dazed silence of Temple and Co., "you've only got to say the word, Temple. I'll take it on."

"You—you'll take it on!" murmured Temple.

"Yes. It will mean a win for you, instead of a practically certain defeat. I don't want to say anything against your cricket, Temple, you know; but it's really a bit funny, ain't it?"

"A—a—a bit fuf-fuf-funny!" stammered Temple.

"Yes. You should hear the way fellows in the Remove talk about your cricket," said Bunter. "Bob Cherry says you ought to play cricket on the front page of 'Chuckles.'"

"D-d-does he?"

"Yes, and he's about right, you know. Now, with me in the team, it will pull your blessed crowd of slackers and fumlbers together, won't it?" said Bunter agreeably. "I'm not only willing to play for you in the cricket week, but I'll give you some coaching beforehand."

"Kik-kik-coaching!"

"Exactly; I'll put you up to real cricket, you know; not your-style at all. Is it a go?" asked Bunter.

Temple blinked at him. He did not seem to feel equal to answering. But, to judge by Cecil Reginald's expression, it was not a "go"; it was, in fact, anything but a go!

Temple rose to his feet, and Dabney and Fry followed his example. All three of the juniors seemed to realise that it was a time for action, not words.

"Scrag him!" gasped Temple.

"Here, I say, you fellows! Hands off, you know——" stammered Bunter, as Temple and Co. rushed on him.

“ Bump him ! ”

“ I—I say ! Help—yaroooooop ! ”

Three pairs of hands had fastened on William George Bunter, like three iron vices. The Owl of the Remove found himself whirling into the passage, and he sat down there with a mighty bump.

Bunter roared.

“ Kick him back to the Remove passage ! ” howled Temple.

“ Oh, rather ! ”

“ Yow-ow-wooop ! ”

Bunter did not wait to be kicked. He leaped up and fled for the Remove passage at top speed. Temple and Co. pursued him as far as the staircase. But terror lent Bunter wings, and he escaped up the Remove staircase in time. He burst into No. 7 Study, and plumped into the arm-chair there, breathless.

“ Hallo, what’s the row now ? ” asked Peter Todd.

Bunter gasped.

“ Oh, dear ! Beasts ! They’re all beasts ! Ungrateful beasts ! Ow ! I—I shall refuse to play in the Cricket Week at all now ! Ow ! ”

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

The Eleventh Man !

“ **D**RAKE ? ”

“ Jack Drake ? ”

Harry Wharton nodded.

“ I think it’s a good idea,” he said. “ Of course, Drake isn’t a Greyfriars fellow now, but he has been—— ”

“ One of the has-beens,” remarked Bob Cherry.

“ He was a jolly good cricketer,” said Frank Nugent.

“ The jolly-goodfulness was terrific,” remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a nod of his dusky head. “ It would be an excellent and esteemed compliment to ask him to play for us in the cricket week.”

“ Exactly ; though I’m not thinking so much of that as of strengthening the team,” said Harry Wharton. “ We’ve got to be jolly careful to come off with flying colours, you know.”

“ Let’s look at the list ! ” said Johnny Bull.

The cricket list was on the table in No. 1 Study. The Famous Five were at tea there,

and giving their consideration to the very important subject of the Cricket Week at the same time.

The subject deserved consideration ; it was quite an unique affair.

St. Jim’s and Rookwood were sending over teams to play the Remove ; and they were also going to play the Fourth Form club. In the circumstances, it was natural that the visitors should be put up at the school ; and, fortunately, there was plenty of accommodation at Greyfriars.

The scheme had gradually developed, and the Head had given it his very sympathetic consideration. Two-day matches were a great improvement on one-day matches, and as each of the visiting teams was to play two matches, there would be four whole days of cricket. The making up of the Remove eleven was a matter that exercised Wharton’s mind to the exclusion of most other things just now. Upon the Remove skipper a great responsibility rested. He had to pick and choose, and the offers he received were simply overwhelming in number. Billy Bunter was by no means the only fellow who yearned to distinguish himself in the cricket week.

The list for the eleven was not quite completed yet. So far it ran : Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Nugent, Hurree Singh, Vernon-Smith, Linley, Todd, S. Q. I. Field, and Tom Brown.

For the eleventh place there were almost innumerable candidates, and among them, those with the best chance of selection were Hazeldene, Penfold, Russell, Ogilvy, and Redwing.

“ Drake was a jolly good man,” said Harry. “ I’d like to see him in the team. If he can’t come along, I think I’d better put in Hazeldene. He’s as good as the rest, anyhow.”

“ And Marjorie would like to see him play,” remarked Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

Harry Wharton laughed.

“ I’d like to please Marjorie Hazeldene, of course,” he said. “ But we’ve got to think of the cricket first.”

“ Oh, of course.”

“ Well, what about Drake ? ” said Nugent. “ The question is, can he come ? He’s in business in London now—assistant to a private detective.”

"Ferrers Locke!" said Harry. "I dare say he's busy. But we can ask him, at any rate. It will do him good to get out of Baker Street for a bit, and come along here and play cricket."

"You bet," agreed Bob.

"Ask him, anyhow," said Johnny Bull. "Time's getting on. Better get Drake's answer as soon as you can. Can you get him on the telephone?"

"That's what I was thinking of," said Harry. "Then the sooner the quicker."

Harry Wharton nodded and left the study. He went downstairs to the study of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

That gentleman greeted him with a kindly nod, and acquiesced immediately when the Remove captain requested the loan of the telephone for a trunk call. Wharton rang up the exchange, and asked for "Trunks," and gave Ferrers Locke's number.

He sat down to wait while he was put "through."

Mr. Quelch left the study, and Wharton strolled to the window, and stood looking out into the quad. He had to wait some time to be put through to London.

The study door opened quietly, and Wharton glanced round, expecting to see Mr. Quelch returning. But it was not the Remove master who entered.

A fat face, adorned by a large pair of spectacles, blinked cautiously into the study.

Billy Bunter stepped quickly in, and closed the door after him, and rolled across to the telephone.

Wharton grinned.

The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not seen him, as he stood in the window recess, partly hidden by the curtain.

Evidently the fat junior had seen Mr. Quelch leave the study, and had crept in to use the telephone surreptitiously.

Bunter took up the receiver, and to Wharton's surprise said "Trunks," to the exchange. Apparently Bunter also was in want of a trunk call that afternoon.

"Number! I don't know the number, but it's Rookwood—Rookwood School, Sussex," said Bunter into the transmitter. "I want to speak to Rookwood School."

Wharton started.

Billy Bunter, certainly, had no business to be speaking to Rookwood School. The fat junior, unaware of the surprised glance directed on him from the window recess, grinned complacently.

"I fancy I'll jolly well put a spoke in their wheel," he murmured aloud. "Jimmy Silver won't know a voice on the telephone—he'll think it's Wharton speaking all right. And when I tell him that the cricket week's off owing to a sudden outbreak of influenza—*he, he, he!*"

Bunter chuckled.

"You fat rascal!" roared Wharton.

"Eh! What?"

Billy Bunter gave a startled jump.

His eyes almost bulged through his spectacles as Wharton came out of the window recess, his eyes blazing.

"I—I say, Wharton, *wh-w-at* are you doing in Quelch's study?" gasped Bunter.

"You fat villain!" thundered Wharton.

"Oh! I—I say——"

"So you were going to ring up Jimmy Silver at Rookwood, and tell him that the cricket week was off!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Nunno! Nothing of the sort!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was going to—to ring him up and—and ask him how he was! That's all! I—I mean, I wasn't going to ring him up at all. I—I—I was going to ring up the—the bun shop in Courtfield—*yaroooooh!*"

Wharton's grasp closed on the fat junior's collar, and he shook—and shook—and shook, till Bunter quivered like a fat jelly.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo!" spluttered the Owl of the Remove. "I—I wasn't—grooh!—besides, it was all your fault for leaving me out—ow!—wow!—and I wasn't going to—*yoooooop!*"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

"Oh, crumbs! Ow, wow!"

With a swing of his strong arm, Wharton spun the fat junior to the door. He opened the door with his left hand and spun Bunter into the passage. The Owl of the Remove spun there a good deal like a very fat humming-top, and sat down with a crash.

"Ooooooop!"

Wharton closed the door on him. Billy Bunter scrambled up and limped away, a sadder if not a wiser Bunter.

Buzz-z-z-z!

The telephone bell rang, and Wharton picked up the receiver. He was through to Baker Street at last.

"Hallo!"

"Is that Mr. Locke?" Wharton asked.

"His assistant speaking," came the reply.

"J a c k

Drake?"

"Yes."

"I'm Wharton."

"Oh, hallo! How are you, old chap?" asked Drake cordially.

"Topping! How are you getting on as a merry detective, Drake? Catching a burglar before breakfast every morning?"

"Ha, ha! Not quite!" Drake chuckled.

"I rang you up on business," continued Wharton.

"My hat! Something happened at Greyfriars? Has Bunter burgled the larder?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No, not your kind of business—ours," said Harry, laughing. "We're having a cricket week here next week, and we want you to run down and play for the Remove. Like to?"

"Oh, good! I'd like to no end. Next week?"

"Yes."

"Rotten!" said Drake. "I'm booked for the first part of the week, anyhow. I'm

going down to Folkestone with Mr. Locke. The case may keep us the whole week, unluckily. What a chance to miss!"

"Can't be helped," said Harry. "I thought I'd ask you, though, of course, I knew you'd very likely be busy. Folkestone isn't very far from here, and if you get time to run across, we'll all be jolly glad to see you."

"Right-ho!" said Drake. "I may be able to manage that, and I shall be jolly glad to. Whom are you playing?"

"St. Jim's first, then Rookwood," said Harry. "They're all staying on here for the week and playing Temple's lot, too—two-day matches. You'll see some good cricket if you can come over."

"I'll jolly well come over if I can; you can bet on that. Anyhow, I'd like to know how the matches go," said Drake.

"You can ring me up in Folkestone, if you like; telephone number double-

three double-three. Don't forget."

"Good!"

"Do you wish another three minutes?" came a sweet, musical, feminine voice over the wires.

"No, thanks! Good-bye, Drake old chap, and come over if you can. I'll let you know the verdict, anyhow."

"Right-ho! Good-bye!"

Wharton rang off.

He returned to No. 1 Study, where he



"Now sit down!" said Jimmy Silver, and Bunter sat down—forcibly—on the bridge. And he roared again as he sat!
(See page 77)

announced the result to his chums with a shake of the head.

"Drake can't come."

"Too bad!" said Bob Cherry. "Then it will have to be Hazeldene."

Wharton nodded and wrote Hazeldene's name in the blank place on the cricket list, and at least two persons were pleased thereby—Hazeldene himself and his sister Marjorie, at Cliff House School—when Hazel joyfully biked over and told her the good news.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Arthur Augustus to the Rescue!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, lounged elegantly into the common room at that ancient and celebrated foundation, and turned his eye-glass upon a group of juniors there.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, of the Shell, were bending their heads over a time-table. Blake and Herries and Digby, of the Fourth, were looking on, all interested in the time-table. So were Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, and Redfern, of the New House.

"You fellows lookin' out twains?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Yes; don't bother!" said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Take a reef or two in your jawing tackle, Gussy, old top!" said Monty Lowther. "We're trying to make head or tail of this dashed time-table! I think we ought to leave it to Manners; he's best man at maths!"

"The train seems to be taken off," said Tom Merry, wrinkling his brow. "But there's one at nine that would suit us."

"Saturdays only," said Manners.

"How do you know?"

"That little wriggly thing means Saturdays only."

"Bother it!" said Tom.

"Pway do not wowwy about the twains, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Mannahs——"

"We've got to bag a train for Monday, haven't we?" demanded Tom Merry. "Are you thinking of walking to Greyfriars and carrying the cricket bags in your top-hat?"

"Wats! I regard the suggestion as

widiculous!" said D'Arcy. "I could not possibly cawwy the cwicket bags in my top-hat, Tom Mewwy! Besides, I shall not be wearin' a top-hat!"

"You'll be wearing a fat head, as usual, I suppose!" remarked Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Nine-thirty-seven," said Tom. "What about the nine-thirty-seven?"

"Pway listen to me!"

"Nine-thirty-seven goes only as far as Canterbury," said Manners.

"Blessed if I see——"

"This little squiggly thing means——"

"What with wriggly things and squiggly things, a time-table wants some making out," said Tom Merry ruefully.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus. "But——"

"Dry up for a minute, Gussy!" implored Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Give us a rest, old 'chap, and give your chin a rest!" said Kerr. "Your chin will be showing signs of wear and tear soon, if you keep it going at this rate!"

"Weally, Kerr——"

"Couldn't Gussy go and talk in the passage?" suggested Fatty Wynn, as if struck by a brilliant idea. "If he went into the passage and shut the door, he could go on talking and it wouldn't matter."

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, Wynn——"

"I think the cleven o'clock is the one," said Manners. "There's only two changes——"

"Gussy will get left behind at each change," remarked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Well, we've got to get to Greyfriars somehow," said Tom Merry. "That train will land us pretty late, but better late than never."

"Yaas; but——"

"See if there's a better one, Manners, old chap," said Monty Lowther. "What's the good of being brilliant at mathematics, if you can't get a good train out of a time-table?"

"Bai Jove! Mannahs cannot get a good twain, Lowthah, if there is not a good twain there!"

"Go hon!" said Lowther. "Did you work that out in your head, Gussy?"

"Weally, you know——"

"The eleven o'clock is the one," said Manners. "I suppose this is the latest time-table?"

"It's Gussy's," said Herries.

"Bai Jove! Did you want the latest time-table?" asked Arthur Augustus, innocently. "You did not say so when you asked me if I had a time-table, Hewwies."

"You ass!" roared Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

Manners gave a snort. He turned over the time-table, and looked at the date on it and snorted again.

"Three months old!" he remarked, caustically. "We've been construing it for nothing."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bai Jove! You fellows should weally look at the date on a time-table befoah you start pickin' twains out of it," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, while Tom Merry and Co. glared at him. "It saves time, you know. Howevah, fortunately it does not matter."

"Doesn't it!" roared Tom Merry. "We've been pegging away at this jolly time-table for a quarter of an hour at least."

"Bump him!" said Digby.

"Weally, Dig——"

"I think Gussy had better be bumped," said Tom Merry, rising to his feet. "First he lends us an out-of-date time-table, and then he comes in and wags his chin while we're trying to make head or tail of it. Collar him."

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jumped back.

"Pway don't be wuff beasts, you know," he exclaimed. "It weally does not mattah at all about the twains——"

"You howling ass!" roared Blake. "Can we get to Greyfriars on Monday without a train?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"Do you think we can walk it, ass?"

"Certainly not. But——"

"Bump him!"

"If you fellows will only listen to weason, I will explain——"

But Arthur Augustus had no time to explain. Tom Merry and Co. closed in on him, and the swell of St. Jim's was swept off the floor. He gave a yell of alarm.

"Mind my clobbah, you duffahs! Pway don't wumple my twousahs, you feahful wuffians! Yawoooooh!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus sat on the carpet.

"Gwoogh! You feahful wuffians!" he gasped. "I have a great mind to give you a feahful thwashin' all wound! Ow! Ow! You howwid wottahs. I wefuse to tell you now that my patah is sendin' down the big car to take us ovah to Gweyfwiahs on Monday! Ow!"

"What!" yelled the juniors.

"Oh, cwumbs! You have thwown me into quite a fluttah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "A button is gone off my beastly waistcoat! Oh, deah!"

"The big car!" said Tom Merry. "My hat! That's a jolly good stunt, Arthur Augustus."

"Why didn't you tell us before?" demanded Blake.

"Gwoooogh! How could I tell you befoah, when I have only just awwanged it by telephone," gasped Arthur Augustus. "I wegard all of you as a set of beastly howlin' idiots."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My twousahs are quite dustay——"

"So we're going over to Greyfriars by car on Monday," said George Figgins. "That's a ripping idea."

"Yes, rather."

"I wefuse to tell you, now, whethah we are goin' over by car or not!" spluttered Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to say a word on the subject—and you will not know till the car comes."

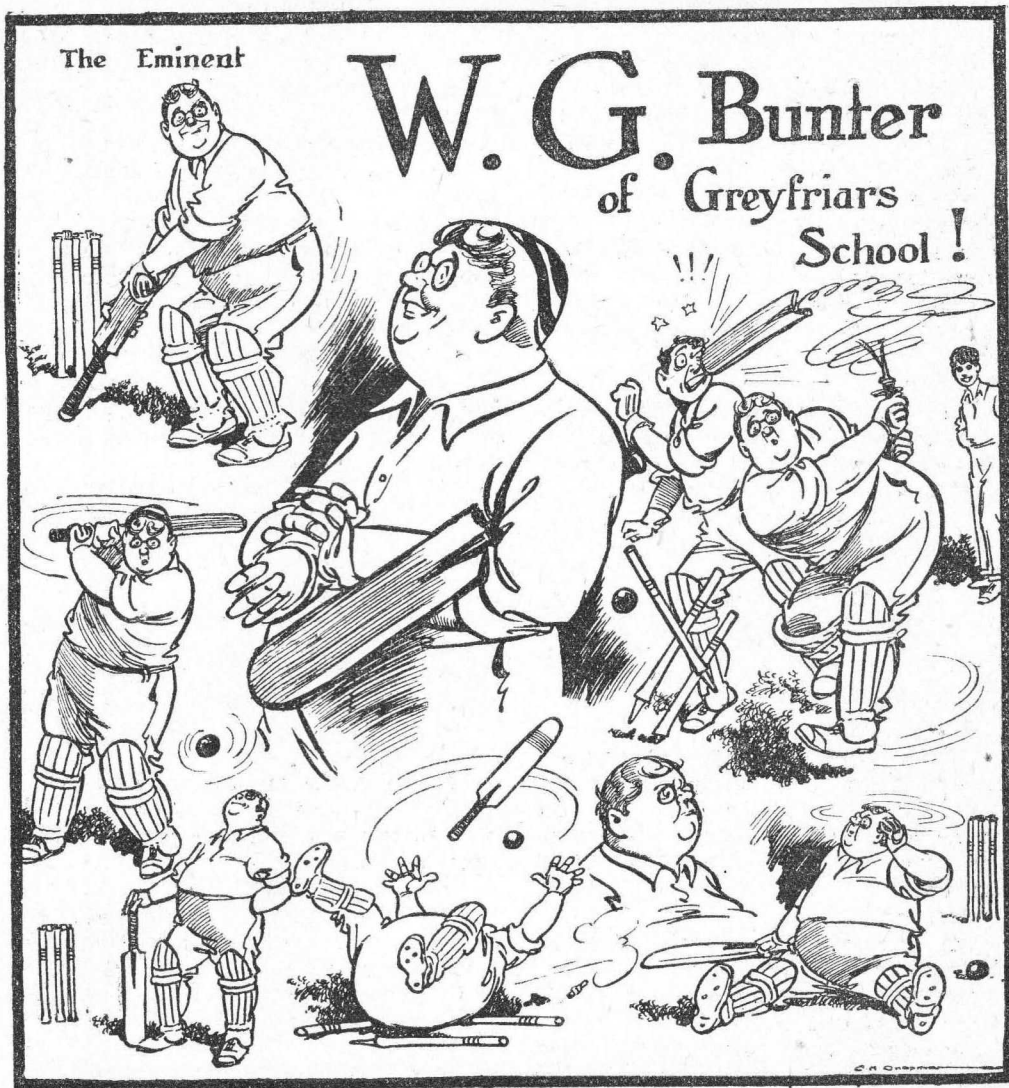
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy retired in great dignity, to seek a clothes-brush, and give the required attention to his immaculate trousers. And a loud chortle followed him from the common-room.

William George on the Cricket Field!

Some Lightning Sketches by C. H. CHAPMAN



It is one of Billy Bunter's favourite delusions that he can play cricket. He is always complaining that it is "personal jealousy" on the part of Harry Wharton that keeps him out of the Remove cricket eleven. Yet when he does play, incidents such as those depicted above invariably happen!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Nothing Doing!

MONDAY was a great day at Greyfriars School.

Twenty-two cricketers were arriving that day, eleven from St. Jim's and eleven from Rookwood; and they were bringing other fellows with them, so the total of the guests would not be much under thirty.

It was a great occasion for the Remove. Indeed, the juniors would have been quite willing to turn every summer week into a cricket week; and, in fact, every winter week into a football week! They would have regarded that as a great improvement on lessons. But, kind and considerate as Dr. Locke was, his kindness and consideration were not likely to stretch to such an extent. One cricket week was much to be thankful for.

Accommodation had been provided in the dormitories, and the guests were going to breakfast and dine in Hall; and for tea and supper they could choose between Hall and the studies. The weather was glorious, and there was every prospect that it would continue glorious. The Lower School of Greyfriars was in high feather.

Billy Bunter wasn't satisfied; but nobody seemed to mind very much whether Bunter was satisfied or not. The Owl of the Remove was not a very important person in the scheme of things at Greyfriars. If Bunter wore a frown on that auspicious day, it is probable that no one even noticed whether it was a frown or a smile; which naturally added to the ire of William George Bunter, who, in his own eyes at least, was a person of the very first importance.

"They're coming over from St. Jim's by car," Harry Wharton remarked to his chums. "D'Arcy's pater is lending a car; I've heard from Tom Merry. The Rookwood chaps get to Courtfield by express train, and take the local on to Friardale. We'll have a brake to meet them there."

"I say, you fellows——"

Bunter's interruption passed unheeded. The Famous Five were too full of great affairs to heed Bunter.

"I've fixed up with the man about the

brake," continued Harry. "I've got to tell him the time of the train. Jimmy Silver arrives at Courtfield at twelve."

"That means the local to Friardale arriving at twelve fifteen," remarked Frank Nugent.

"That's it; twelve fifteen at Friardale. One of us had better run down on a bike and tell the brake merchant."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz off, Bunter."

The Famous Five walked away, discussing the matter, leaving Bunter blinking after them angrily.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter. "Not even offering a chap a lift in the brake to meet his old pals from Rookwood. Lemme see!" Bunter wrinkled his fat brows in thought. "They get to Courtfield Junction at twelve, and it takes some minutes to change trains—and very likely they'll have to wait for the local." Bunter grinned. "My hat! I'll jolly well put a spoke in their wheel! He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter blinked cautiously round him.

Harry Wharton was wheeling out his bike, apparently to ride off with the instructions for the brake. Bunter chuckled as he wheeled his bike out of the gates. The Owl of the Remove followed, and stared after Wharton, disappearing in a cloud of dust towards Friardale. Bunter turned in the opposite direction, and trudged away towards Courtfield.

It was between two and three miles to Courtfield, and Bunter was not a good walker, and he did not like walking. Progress was slow, and made slower by several long halts for rest in the grassy bank by the roadside. It was just as well that Bunter had started quite early, for the walk to Courtfield occupied an hour and a half. But the fat junior, red and perspiring, rolled up to Courtfield Junction Station at last. It was ten minutes to twelve.

"Good!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled into the station, and expended a penny upon a platform ticket, and stationed himself on the platform to await the train from Latcham which was bringing the Rookwood crowd.

Prompt at noon the express came buzzing in.

It stopped in the station, and the passengers crowded out, among them a party of school-boys with cricket bags and other bags, in whom Bunter recognised Jimmy Silver and Co. He knew them all by sight—Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome, Mornington, Erroll, Conroy, Tommy Dodd, Cook, Doyle, Towle, and the friends who had accompanied the cricketers. And they knew him, too; his fat figure was prominent on the platform, and Jimmy Silver waved a hand to him.

"Hallo, it's Bunter!" said Jimmy.

"They're not meeting us here," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "We go on to Friardale; that's the arrangement."

"Three minutes to catch the local," said Mornington. "There it is, on the other line. We go over the bridge."

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver.

Billy Bunter hastened to join the Rookwooders as they started in a body for the bridge over the line.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, Bunter, old bean!" said Jimmy Silver genially.

He did not esteem Billy Bunter very much, but Jimmy was always genial; and, besides, he was in great spirits that day.

"I came along to meet you fellows here."

"Thanks, awfully."

"Don't hurry over the bridge," said Bunter.

"There's nothing to catch the local for."

"Eh? We've got to get on to Friardale for Greyfriars."

Bunter shook his head.

"I'm awfully sorry, old chap," he said.

"But it's no go. That's why I came to meet you here. Hasn't Wharton told you about the outbreak of influenza?"

"Influenza!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Yes. Practically the whole school down with it," said Bunter calmly. "I suppose you missed the telegram at Rookwood when you started."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, in dismay.

"It's too bad," said Bunter, blinking sympathetically at the Rookwood cricketers, who had halted in a dismayed crowd on the bridge. "I'm really awfully sorry. It struck me that you mightn't have got the telegram

in time, so I came along here to meet you, and save you making the rest of the journey for nothing."

"What a go!" ejaculated Raby.

"Oh, rotten!" groaned Lovell.

"The best thing you can do is to take the next train back to Rookwood," said Bunter sympathetically.

Jimmy Silver eyed him.

"This outbreak is awfully sudden, isn't it?" he asked.

"Frightfully sudden," said Bunter. "It—it grew up like a mushroom in the night, you know."

"All well yesterday—what?" asked Jimmy suspiciously.

He knew something of Bunter, and of his partiality for the methods of Ananias, and he had a growing suspicion that the fat junior was seeking to pull his leg.

"Yes, quite; but when we woke up this morning it was fairly on us," said Bunter. "That—that's why Wharton couldn't telegraph till this morning. He did it as early as he could."

"Is Wharton ill, too?" asked Lovell.

"Horribly! Lying on his back and groaning when I left him," said Bunter. "It was—was heartrending!"

"If he was horribly ill, how did he manage to send a telegram?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"He—he—was just able to write it, and the—the porter took it—old Gosling, you know," said Bunter. "I—I told Wharton I'd come and meet you here, and save you finishing the journey for nothing, and he thanked me with tears in his eyes."

"He did, did he?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes, I am his best friend, you know—pals ever since we came to Greyfriars," explained Bunter. "He put his hand in mine, and said 'Thank you, Billy, old chap,' in a weak voice."

Billy Bunter had a lively imagination, which had been rendered more and more lively by constant visits to the "pictures." He was now piling on the agony, so to speak, in order to give his surprising statement a convincing effect. As a matter of fact, the effect he produced was anything but convincing.

All the Rookwood cricketers were looking very suspicious now.

"How many are down with it?" asked Newcome.

"The whole school. The doctor's there now isolating them," said Bunter. "You fellows must be careful to keep clear of the place. You know how dangerous small-pox is."

"Small-pox!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, it's a fearful disease, and you might catch it simply by calling at the gates."

"You said influenza a minute ago!" yelled Lovell.

Bunter started. Once more he had forgotten, as he often did, that a certain class of persons should have good memories.

"I—I mean influenza," he said hastily. "Or—or, to be more exact, it—it's a combination of influenza and small-pox; awfully dangerous. There have

been several deaths already." Billy Bunter, uninvited as he was, decided to devote his attention to the cake, which he did with great effect. The fellows near him were kept pretty busy passing things. (See page 79)

"Great Scott!" "And the whole school is isolated," said Bunter.

"Then what are you doing out of gates?"

"Oh! I—I—I mean——"

"You've come along to give us influenza and small-pox combined, what?" asked Lovell.

"Nunno! I—I——"

There was a shriek of a train-whistle, and Lovell uttered an exclamation.

"There goes the train!"

"It's Bunter's fault!" exclaimed Jimmy

Silver, wrathfully. "We've lost it now! I'll scalp that fat bounder for stopping us!"

"Oh, really, Silver——"

"Cut off and enquire the time of the next train to Friardale, Lovell. Now," continued Jimmy, as Arthur Edward Lovell ran off—"now, Bunter, you fat villain, what do you mean by spinning us this yarn and making us lose the connection?"

"If you doubt my word, Silver——" exclaimed Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Your word! My hat!"

"Scrag him!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"I—I say, you fellows—it—it's true, every word!" gasped Bunter. "I tell you every fellow at Greyfriars is down with scarlet fever——"

"Scarlet fever?" shrieked Jimmy Silver.

"I mean small-pox—that is to say, influenza—yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as Jimmy Silver seized him by one ear, and Mornington held on to the other.

"Yooop! Leggo! Help!"

"Knock his head against the bridge," said Jimmy.

"You bet!"

Crack!

There was a fiendish yell from Bunter, as his head came into contact with the iron bridge.

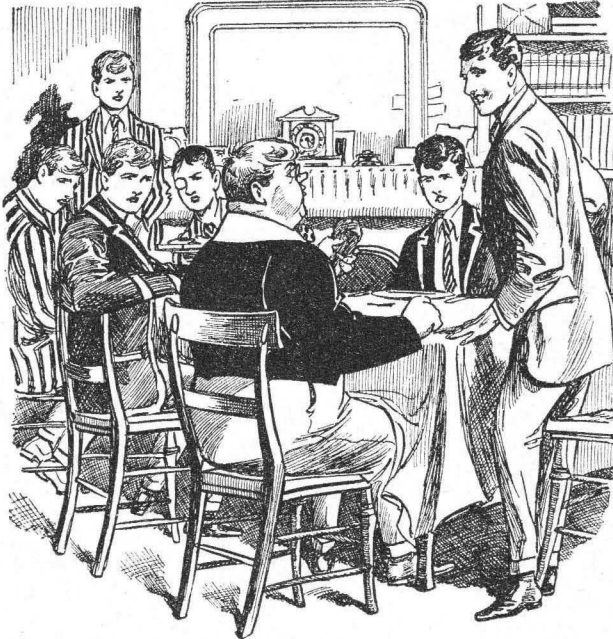
"Yarooooooh!"

"Now tell us the truth, you fat villain!"

"Yow-ow! I have——"

Crack!

"Yoooop! Stoppit!" yelled Bunter. "I——"



I—I was only j-j-joking—can't you take a j-j-joke ?”

Crack !

“ Whooooooooooop !”

“ Now sit down,” said Jimmy Silver, and Bunter sat down—forcibly—on the bridge. And he roared again as he sat.

The Rookwooders marched on to the local platform, leaving Bunter sitting on the bridge, rubbing his head, and gasping for breath. Once more the little schemes of William George Bunter had gone awry. Arthur Edward Lovell rejoined his comrades with the news that there was another train for Friardale in a quarter of an hour.

For fifteen minutes Jimmy Silver and Co. had to cool their heels on the local platform at Courtfield till the train came in. During that interval Billy Bunter did not venture to approach them. But when the train came in, the Owl of the Remove came rushing up.

“ I say, you fellows——”

“ Scat !”

“ I say, I'm coming in this train——”

“ Take your bat to him, Lovell.”

“ I—I say—give a chap room——”

“ Get into some other carriage !” growled Jimmy Silver. “ I'll jolly well biff you if you cram in with us, you fat fraud.”

“ Lend me a bob for the ticket——”

“ What ?”

“ I—I left my money indoors—all my bank-notes and—currency notes !” gasped Bunter. “ Lend me a bob——”

“ Lend him your bat, Lovell.”

“ I—I don't want a bat—I want a bob to pay my fare—yaroooooh !” It was the bat not the “ bob,” that Bunter received, and he sat down on the platform as Arthur Edward Lovell prodded him. The Rookwood fellows crowded into the train, and as it moved out of the station, the windows were crowded with merry faces, watching Bunter.

Bunter, still breathless, sat on the platform, blinking after the train.

“ Good-bye, little bird !” sang out Lovell.

“ Ha, ha, ha !”

“ Yah ! Beasts !” gasped Bunter. “ Oh, dear—ow——”

“ Ha, ha, ha !”

The train glided on with the crowd of

Rookwooders—who arrived fifteen minutes after time at Friardale, and found Harry Wharton and Co. waiting for them with the brake. Fifteen minutes did not matter very much, but Bunter's plight was much more serious. He had to walk back from Courtfield to Greyfriars—and three miles in the sun was no joke to William George Bunter ; and as he dragged one weary fat leg after the other, he repented him deeply and sincerely that he had thought of “ putting a spoke ” in the wheel of the Removites. And when he arrived at Greyfriars he found it crowded with guests—but dinner long over—and there was no dinner for Bunter.

Which was the last straw ! It was not until tea-time that life seemed to Bunter to be worth living.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Tea in No. 1 Study

“ BAI JOVE ! This is weally wippin'.”

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Certainly it was ripping. At tea-time there was a very distinguished party gathered in No. 1 Study in the Remove.

That celebrated study, though unusually ample in size for junior quarters, could not accommodate all the guests. But every study in the Remove and the Fourth was open and welcome to the visitors. In the Remove passage, nearly every study had a guest or two, and in the Fourth, Temple, Dabney and Co. were rivalling the Remove in hospitality. But the most distinguished circle had gathered in No. 1, Remove.

The Famous Five were all there, of course. The two visiting captains, Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver, were there. So were Blake and Herries, and Talbot of the Shell at St. Jim's ; and Arthur Edward Lovell of Rookwood, and last, but not least, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the St. Jim's Fourth. No. 1 Study was pretty well filled with twelve fellows in it—but nobody minded ; good-humour reigned supreme. And the spread on the study table was unusually magnificent. The afternoon sun glimmered in at the windows—outside, the old quad. of Greyfriars and the elm trees could be seen, with a strip of the playing-fields—where Wingate and the

mighty men of the Sixth were at cricket. Sixth-Form cricket, however, did not draw much attention from the Lower School now. The juniors were fully occupied with the Junior Cricket Week. Play was to begin on the morrow, and Bob Cherry declared that it would be a perfect pitch. While the Remove played St. Jim's, the Fourth Form were going to play Rookwood—and Bob had privately predicted that Greyfriars would score a victory and a defeat—needless to say, Bob opined that the victory would rest with the Remove, while defeat would be the portion of the Fourth.

“Another cup of tea, D'Arcy?”

“Try the cheese cakes—”

“Yaas, wathah! Thank you very much, deah boys. It's awf-ly agweeable to see you fellows wound about again,” said Arthur Augustus, beaming amiably upon the assembly. “I am only sowwy that we are goin' to whop you on your own gound—but aftah all, the game is the thing, isn't it?”

“Perhaps you're not going to whop us, you know,” said Harry Wharton, laughing.

“Pewhaps, deah boy,” assented D'Arcy. “Cwicket is a vewy uncertain game, and there is weally no tellin' what will happen. Extwa-ordinawy chances do occur in cwicket.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I say, Gussy, old chap!” said a fat voice in the doorway. The door had been left open for coolness; and now the doorway framed the fat form of William George Bunter of the Remove.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his famous eyeglass upon the Owl of the Remove.

“Bai Jove! How do you do, Buntah, deah boy?” said Arthur Augustus, with just a trifle less geniality in his manner.

“Awfully glad to see you again, Gussy! You haven't forgotten the time I came over to St. Jim's, what?”

“Not at all, Buntah.”

Bunter wedged into the study. Five pairs of eyes looked at him very expressively; but Bunter did not catch any of them. And Harry Wharton and Co. felt a certain natural hesitation in slinging Bunter out under the eyes of their distinguished guests.

“Got room for a fellow?” asked Bunter agreeably.

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 5.—CYCLING



The clarion call of spring is come,

So get your cycles ready!

And then select your favourite chum,

Dick, Tom, or Bob, or Teddy.

Set off together, side by side,

Through country lanes and byways;

And whistle gaily as you glide

Along the pleasant highways!

O'er hill and dale, past hedge and stream,

Go gliding at your leisure:

With joy of life your eyes will gleam,

Your cheeks will glow with pleasure.

The fair and charming countryside

Will prove both sweet and striking;

You will enjoy a topping ride

And bless the joys of biking!

What matters if your tyre goes flat,

Or if you can't continue?

You'll heed no obstacles like that

If optimism's in you!

The puncture mended, on you'll speed

Through scenes of sunny splendour,

Seeking some farmhouse, there to feed

With many a gay week-end!

The pleasures of the open road

Are plain to all beholders:

There all your troubles, in a load,

Go sliding from your shoulders.

Then seek the joys of dale and hill,

Away from all distractions;

And, laughing gaily, drink your fill

Of cycling's keen attractions!

"No!" hissed Bob Cherry under his breath. "What did you say, Cherry?" asked Bunter very loudly.

"Plenty of room," said Blake. "Here's half my chair——"

"And half mine, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"Thanks very much," said Bunter calmly, seating himself between the two St. Jim's juniors, heedless of the Famous Five. "Jolly glad to see you again, Gussy. Pass the cake, will you?"

"Certainly, Buntah."

Arthur Augustus passed the cake, and was rather surprised to see Bunter transfer it bodily to his plate. There were several cakes, but they were going fairly fast, and Bunter apparently did not want to risk getting "left."

"Did you have a good run over in the car, you chaps?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Topping!" said Tom Merry. "Luckily, the chauffeur wouldn't let Gussy show him the way, so we got here on time."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Lucky bargees," said Jimmy Silver. "We had to come over by a common or garden train."

"Why didn't you let me know, old chap?" chimed in Billy Bunter. "I'd have asked my pater to send over his big Rolls-Royce for you."

"Bai Jove! That would have been vewy kind of you, Buntah," said Arthur Augustus unsuspectingly. "It is weally a pity Silvah did not let you know."

"On another occasion, Silver, I'll do it," said Bunter. "Would you rather have the Rolls-Royce or the Mercédès?"

"Quite easy to send either, I suppose!" remarked Jimmy Silver, with a touch of playful sarcasm.

"Oh, quite! It's only a matter of telephoning to Bunter Court. I'll send you home in one of them if you like."

"That's awfully good of you, Bunter," said Jimmy Silver, "but we want to get back to Rookwood before our extreme old age, you know."

"Eh?"

"And I'm afraid we should be fairly ancient

by the time the Rolls-Royce and the Mercédès turned up," said Jimmy, shaking his head.

There was a chuckle in No. 1 Study, and Billy Bunter coughed. He decided to devote his attention to the cake, which he did with great effect. The fellows near him were kept pretty busy passing him things. True, the Famous Five seemed deaf when Bunter called for supplies, but the St. Jim's fellows and the Rookwooders played up, so the Owl of the Remove was well looked after.

There was a merry hum of conversation in No. 1 Study over tea—in which Bunter's voice was heard considerably, though rather muffled, as his mouth was full most of the time. Bunter confided to D'Arcy and Blake that they hadn't much to expect in the way of cricket during their stay—the best man had been left out of the Remove team, he explained, owing to personal jealousy on the part of the cricket captain.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus quietly.

"Oh, really, D'Arcy——"

"I have seen you play cwicket, you know, Buntah."

"Same here," grinned Blake.

Bunter blinked at one, and then at the other.

"You St. Jim's fellows don't know much about cricket," he said. "When I was over at St. Jim's I noticed that. Look at the way you fumble when you're bowling, D'Arcy."

"What?"

"And the way you stand at the wicket," said Bunter. "Enough to make a cat laugh, isn't it?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Cherry, old chap, do try to think of your manners when we've got guests here," said Bunter chidingly. "Don't mind him, D'Arcy—he's always like that. I try to cure him, but——" Bunter shrugged his fat shoulders hopelessly.

"Weally, Buntah——" murmured Arthur Augustus feebly. William George Bunter was almost too much for the swell of St. Jim's.

"Another cup of tea, Wharton," said Bunter, holding out his cup. The tea was finished, and the tea-party were rising.

Wharton did not heed; he was not there to satisfy the unbidden guest.



"Where do you feel the pain?" asked Bob Cherry. "All over!" said Bunter, pathetically. "I'll give you something to cure all that, my fat old bean!" said Bob. Swipe! (See page 81)

"Deaf, old fellow?" bawled Bunter.

"I'll give you a cup of tea, Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"Thanks. Plenty of sugar."

Bob Cherry filled the cup to the brim, chiefly with hot water. Billy Bunter grinned as he took it. But at the same moment Johnny Bull pushed past his chair, and, perhaps by accident, his boot kicked the leg of it, and it was swept away.

There was a spluttering roar from Billy Bunter as he sat on the carpet, with the tea streaming over his fat face.

"Yoooooooooop!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Oh, sorry!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

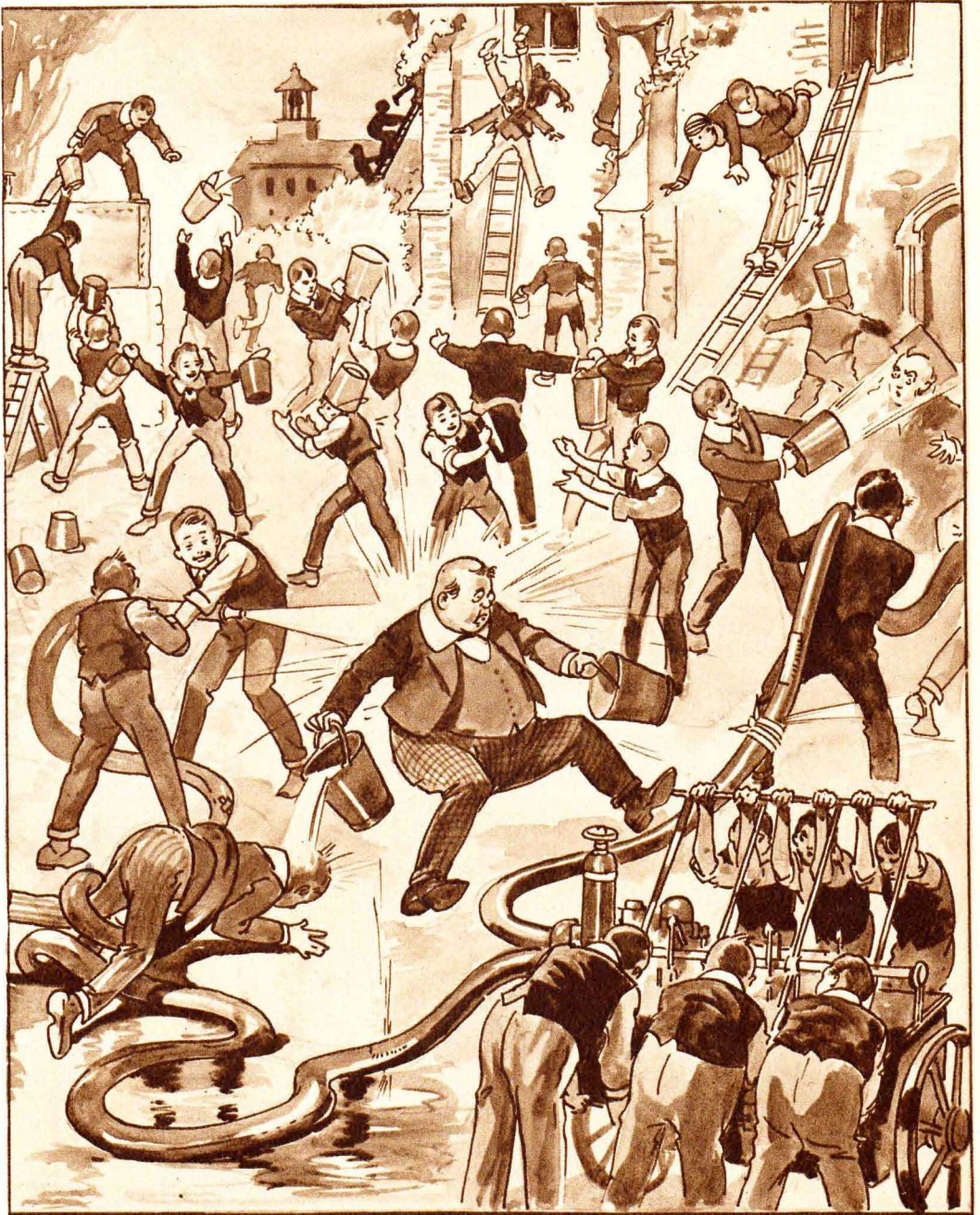
"Yaroooh! Beasts! You did that on purpose," roared Bunter, mopping his streaming face. "One beast gave me the tea

while the other beast kicked my chair. I'm scalded—I'm wet—I'm smothered! Gimme a hand up, you rotters! Ow! Leggo my ear, Bob Cherry—leggo my ear, Bull, you awful rotter! Yarooooooh."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton and Co. and their guests crowded out of the study, leaving William George Bunter roaring. They were grinning as they went down the Remove passage; even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was smiling. As they came out into the quad., Gussy confided to Tom Merry "that that boundah Buntah was weally the absolute limit." Tom Merry agreed that he was, and a little over. When William George Bunter—having mopped off the spilt tea—rolled out into the quadrangle in search of his chum Gussy, the swell of St. Jim's unobtrusively, but very carefully, gave him a wide berth. For some reason—

ALL HANDS TO THE PUMPS!



To face page 80.]

FIRE-DRILL AT GREYFRIARS SCHOOL!

The Junior Fire Brigade Puts in some Strenuous Practice

quite a mystery to himself—William George was not popular among the guests at Greyfriars. He blinked morosely at the crowd of cheery juniors.

“Let ’em wait!” murmured Bunter. “They little know! Ha, ha, ha! Let ’em wait!”

From which, if Harry Wharton and Co. had heard it, they would have deduced that Billy Bunter was still under the influence of the “pictures.”

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Missing!

CLANG! Clang! Clang!

The rising bell rang out over Greyfriars in the clear, sunny morning.

Bob Cherry, as usual, was first out of bed in the Remove dormitory. Arthur Augustus D’Arcy, of St. Jim’s, sat up and yawned a little.

The long, lofty dormitory was fairly well filled. There was ample space for the extra beds that had been placed there, and the St. Jim’s party were all accommodated in the Remove sleeping-quarters; the Rookwooders being with the Fourth. Arthur Augustus D’Arcy sat up and looked round him with a benignant smile, after a yawn.

“Good-mornin’, deah boys,” he said.

“Top of the morning, old top!” roared Bob Cherry. There was no need to shout; but Bob Cherry always started the day in exuberant spirits.

“The topfulness of the esteemed morning is terrific, my worthy and ridiculous friend,” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a beaming smile on his dusky face.

Arthur Augustus grinned. Hurree Singh’s flow of language was a delight to him, and he never suspected that his own remarkable accent was a source of joy to other fellows.

“Slept well?” asked Harry Wharton.

“Yaas, wathah.”

“Like a top!” said Tom Merry cheerily.

“Bai Jove! I slept as soundly as anythin’, you know,” said Arthur Augustus as he projected a silk-pyjama-clad leg from the bed. “Nevah slept bettah in my life. It’s goin’ to be a wippin’ day for cwicket, I think.”

“Turn out, Bunter!” roared Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter blinked sleepily from the bed-clothes.

“I say, you fellows, I’m not getting up yet. No lessons to-day, you know, for the Remove, so there’s no need——”

“Roll out, porpoise.”

“You might mention to Quelch that I’m ill, and that I’d like my brekker in bed,” said Bunter.

“Ill?” said Bob. “Poor old Bunter! If you’re ill, old fellow, I’m going to look after you.”

“Poor old Buntah!” said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. “I am vewy sowwy to heah that you do not feel well, deah boy. Bai Jove! What are you up to, Chewwy?”

The St. Jim’s fellows stared, as Bob proceeded to look after the invalid. He took the bolster from his bed for the purpose. Billy Bunter eyed him with apprehension as he approached.

“Look here, you beast——” he began.

“Where do you feel the pain?” asked Bob.

“All over,” said Bunter pathetically. “I think I’ve got pneumonia in the left lung, and a slight attack of colic in the ribs——”

“I’ll give you something to cure all that, my fat old bean.”

Swipe!

“Yaroooooh!” roared Bunter.

He rolled out on the other side of the bed, with an activity remarkable in a fellow who was suffering from both pneumonia and colic. He landed on the floor with a bump, and roared again.

“Have some more?” asked Bob.

“Yah! Beast! No.”

“I’ve only given you one for the pneumonia,” said Bob. “Won’t you have another one for the colic?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Beast!”

Bunter seemed cured all of a sudden, and he turned to dressing—bed being out of the question with the exuberant Bob in the dormitory.

“Bai Jove, you know!” Arthur Augustus murmured to Talbot of St. Jim’s. “The fat boundah was only shammin’. I do weally wegard Buntah as the outside edge, you know.”

And Talbot laughed and nodded. But for the fact that he was a guest at Greyfriars, Arthur Augustus would probably have treated Bunter to a little fatherly advice. As it was, he held his peace, but he gave the Owl of the Remove a glance of strong disfavour.

The toilet of Arthur Augustus was a more serious matter than it was with most fellows. Most of the Remove and the St. Jim's fellows had gone down before D'Arcy was finished. Even Billy Bunter was out of the dormitory. Harry Wharton lingered, from motives of politeness, while the swell of St. Jim's gave himself the finishing touches.

"Pway don't wait for me, deah boy," said D'Arcy kindly. "I shall only be a few minutes more——"

"No hurry," said Wharton, and he sat on a bed.

"Some fellows," said Arthur Augustus confidentially, "think it weally does not mattah how you tie a necktie in the mornin'. My ideah is that if a thing is worth doin' at all, it is worth doin' well. What?"

"Certainly," said Harry, with a smile. "That's the third necktie you've tied, isn't it?"

"Yaas. I am always wathah particulah about my ties," confessed Arthur Augustus. "Not that I think vewy much about dwess, you know. But a fellow likes to be decent. Is this all wight?"

"Right as rain."

"You think the pearl pin goes well with the blue?"

"First rate," said Harry, as gravely as he could.

"I agwee with you, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, surveying himself in the glass. "I wathah think that will do. Now I want my watch and chain, and I shall be finished."

He approached his bed, to take the watch and chain from under the pillow, where he had placed them the preceding night. He turned back the pillow, but the watch and chain were not to be seen.

"Bai Jove! The botherin' things have slipped down into the bed somewhere," said Arthur Augustus.

"I'll help you."

Wharton came to the aid of the swell of

St. Jim's, and jerked away pillow and bolster, and then the bedclothes. Arthur Augustus began to look surprised—and so did Wharton. The watch and chain certainly ought to have been in sight then—but they were not to be seen.

"Sure you put them under your pillow?" asked Harry.

"Yaas, wathah! I wemembah puttin' them there, aftah windin' up the watch, you know."

Wharton nodded. He remembered now having seen D'Arcy winding his watch; the celebrated gold "ticker" which had been a present from his noble pater, Lord Eastwood. It had, in fact, attracted many glances in the Remove dormitory. The gold watch was worth a large sum, and the gold chain was a very valuable one; and on the end of the chain Gussy wore a little russia leather purse, in which he kept his banknotes. Altogether, the article was a very valuable one. Arthur Augustus had certainly placed it, all together—watch, chain and purse—under his pillow the night before. But now——

"Better search right through the bed," said Wharton abruptly.

"Yaas, wathah."

The two juniors turned the bed thoroughly out. They were so occupied when Bob Cherry looked in at the door.

"Hallo, halle, hallo! You fellows making the beds?" he inquired.

"Come in, Bob," said Harry, in so quiet a tone that Bob looked at him in surprise.

"Anything wrong?" asked Bob as he came in.

"D'Arcy can't find his watch and chain."

"My hat!"

"It is wathah wemarkable," said Arthur Augustus, evidently in a state of great astonishment, "it was undah my pillow last night—and now it appeahs to be gone."

"Gone!" ejaculated Bob.

"Yaas, wathah."

"But it can't be gone," exclaimed Bob, incredulously. "Dash it all, the thing must be in the bed somewhere. Let's look."

"We've looked," said Harry quietly. "But we'll look again."

"Yaas, wathah."

Once more the bed was turned out thoroughly. Every sheet and blanket was shaken separately; and the juniors searched under the bed, and round about it. But there was no sign whatever of the missing article.

They desisted at last, and stood looking at one another. Harry Wharton's face was a little set; Bob Cherry's flushed and surprised. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was very thoughtful.

"Some silly ass has been larkin'," said the swell of St. Jim's. "Pway don't think that I mind, deah boys—it is simply a case of a mistaken sense of humah. Some silly ass abstwacted my watch and chain fwom undah my pillow for a pwactical joke."

"I suppose that was it," said Bob. "It's certainly not here."

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Practical jokes of that sort on visitors aren't allowed," he said. "I'll jolly well punch the silly ass's head when I find him out. I dare say it was Skinner—just one of his tricks."

"Most likely," assented Bob.

"Pway don't punch Skinnah's head, deah boy," said D'Arcy mildly. "It would distwess me vewy much to be the cause of a wow."

"Well, I'll ask him," said Harry.

Johnny Bull looked into the dormitory.

"Brekker's ready," he announced. "What are you roosting up here for?"

"Coming!" said Bob.

And the juniors went down to breakfast.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

A Mystery!

AFTER breakfast that morning, most of the fellows were thinking of cricket. Stumps were to be pitched fairly early, and two matches were to begin: Remove v. St. Jim's, and Fourth Form v. Rookwood. Harry Wharton had expected to give his whole attention to cricket that morning; but now he had another matter to think about. The question of D'Arcy's watch and chain had to be settled without delay. Wharton could not believe that the disappearance of the article was anything but a practical joke, but such a joke on a visitor, with an article of great value concerned, made him angry. He did not want

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 6.—RUNNING



Near the school gates the runners stand,
A group of light-clad figures;
And while they wait, an eager band,
The slacker stands and sniggers.
Cries he, "Those fools intend to run
Through muddy, miry places;
Why, as for me, I should be 'done'
Before I'd gone ten paces!"

The pistol cracks; away they leap,
Those figures clad but thinly;
Some cling together in a heap,
The leading light is Linley.
He sets the pace, resolved that in
The vanguard they will find him;
While Cherry, with a genial grin,
Is pressing hard behind him!
Mile follows mile, and one by one
The runners quit the tussle;
For some are "whacked," and fairly done,
And can no longer hustle.
But Linley "sticks it!" to the end
And proves a splendid winner;
Loud cheers from every loyal friend,
And then—a bumper dinner!

That running is a manly sport
All manly folk inform us;
When tired of gym, or tennis court,
Its value is enormous.
Let slackers slack; let cunning cads
Continue in their cunning;
But all the really sporting lads
Will find delight in running!

to spoil the harmony of the great occasion by a "row," but certainly he would have liked to punch the head that had thought of such a practical joke. When the juniors left the dining-room, the captain of the Remove followed Skinner into the quadrangle. The latter was loafing about with Snoop and Stott, not being greatly concerned in cricket. Harry Wharton tapped him on the shoulder.

"Were you larking in the dorm. last night, Skinner?" he asked.

Skinner stared at him.

"Not unless I was walking in my sleep," he answered. "What's the row?"

"Look here," said Wharton abruptly. "If you've been playing tricks on D'Arcy, Skinner, own up at once, and the matter can drop. It's not a matter that can be left unsettled."

"Blessed if I know what you're driving at," said Skinner, and he certainly looked puzzled. "Has anybody been pulling the D'Arcybird's noble leg?"

"His watch and chain and purse were taken from under his pillow last night while he was asleep."

Skinner whistled.

"Do you know anything about it?" asked Harry.

"Nothing."

"It was some rotten practical joker——"

"Thanks," said Skinner, with a yawn. "I may be a rotten practical joker, as you so politely and elegantly put it. But I didn't play this particular rotten practical joke. Not guilty, my lord!"

"Do you fellows know anything about it?" asked Wharton, looking at Snoop and Stott. They shook their heads.

"Well, it's got to be found!" said the captain of the Remove, rather at a loss.

"Look for it and find it," then, old top," said Skinner agreeably. "Your business as the chap's your guest—not mine. But you needn't tell me any rot about a practical joke. Fellows in their senses don't pinch gold watches for a joke. If the watch is gone, it's been pinched."

"Rot!" exclaimed Harry sharply.

"Better ask Bunter," grinned Skinner. "He always believes that a thing belongs to him, if he wants it. I noticed that D'Arcy

had a fat purse on the end of his watch-chain. Perhaps dear old Bunty's taken a fancy to his banknotes."

Wharton started.

"He—he—wouldn't—he couldn't—it's—it's impossible."

"Nothing's impossible, where Bunter and cash are concerned together," chuckled Skinner. "Try Bunter."

And Skinner and Co. walked away, laughing. The slackers of the Remove had nothing to do in Cricket Week. And they looked as if they were rather pleased than otherwise at this cloud that had suddenly appeared on the horizon.

Harry Wharton stood for a few minutes in thought, his brow very dark. Only too well he knew Billy Bunter's little ways—and the great confusion of his fat mind on the subject of *meum* and *tuum*. If Bunter had picked up a banknote, probably he would have kept it, on the principle that findings were keepings; he really was too obtuse to realise clearly the dividing line between honesty and dishonesty. But this was quite a different matter. If D'Arcy's watch had been taken to keep, it was a deliberate theft—and no amount of obtuseness could disguise that fact from the perpetrator. And Bunter, though he sometimes ventured perilously near the dividing line, was not a thief.

"It's not possible!" Wharton muttered aloud. "It could only be a joke—a rotten silly joke——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry joined the captain of the Remove. "You've asked Skinner——"

"He says he knows nothing about it."

"Then it was some other silly ass——"

"He suggests Bunter——"

"It's possible," said Bob. "Let's look for Bunter. Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is! Bunter!" bawled Bob.

Billy Bunter was rolling along at a little distance; but he did not turn his head, though certainly he must have heard Bob's stentorian hail. He rolled on regardless.

"Bunter!" roared Bob.

Still the fat junior did not stop or turn his head. Wharton and Bob broke into a run, and intercepted him.

"You fat idiot——" began Wharton angrily.

Bunter blinked at him, with a blink of lofty contempt.

"I'll be glad if you fellows will keep your distance," he said.

"What?"

"I'm left out of the cricket," said Bunter. "You've refused me a place in the Remove team—and I've declined to play for the Fourth, though Temple begged me with tears in his eyes to see him through. I refused—I'll play for my own Form or none! I'm left out! In the circumstances, Wharton, I decline to speak to you. You've treated me badly, from motives of personal jealousy——"

"Look here, you fat duffer——"

"I may say that I despise you, Wharton. I think I ought to say that. I'll try to overlook your conduct. But for the present, I'll be obliged if you'll keep your distance."

"You chump!"

roared Bob Cherry. "Did you pinch D'Arcy's watch and chain last night?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Did you?" snapped Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Will you answer me?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, angrily. "Some silly owl took D'Arcy's watch and chain from under his pillow last night."

"If you think I'm a thief, Wharton——" said William George Bunter, drawing up his little figure to its full height—which was not extensive.

"I suppose it was done for an idiotic joke,"

said Harry. "I want to know where the thing is."

"How should I know?" demanded Bunter.

"Did you pinch it?" snapped Bob.

"I decline to answer such a question," said Bunter. "If you accuse me of pinching a watch and chain I shall go to the Head. You've no right to accuse me."

"We're not accusing you," growled Wharton. "We don't think the thing has been stolen. Somebody's taken it for a fool joke."

"Skinner, perhaps——" suggested Bunter.

"Skinner thinks it was you——"

"What an awful rotter! I say you fellows, perhaps D'Arcy never had a watch and chain at all——"

"You ass, a dozen fellows saw him put it under his pillow."

"Perhaps it's still there," suggested Bunter, brightly.

"Fat head! We've looked."

"Well, look again," said Bunter. "No good bothering a chap who doesn't know

anything about it. After the way you've treated me, Wharton, I decline to give you any more advice about the matter."

"I don't want your advice, you fat chump—I want the watch and chain," growled the captain of the Remove.

"Perhaps Tom Merry pinched it," suggested Bunter. "He was in the next bed to D'Arcy. He's rather a beast——"

"What?"

"I asked him to lend me five bob this morning, and he refused," said Bunter. "I told him I was expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning, and he just cackled!



How it happened the swell of St. Jim's never quite knew; but his bat swept the empty air, and the next second his middle-stump was reclining on the ground! (See page 88)

Talk about manners! I'd have licked him for his cheek, if he hadn't been a guest here. I've a very low opinion of Tom Merry, Wharton. Perhaps he pinched it——"

"Ass!"

"Well, it's no good calling me names," said Bunter. "I've only one suggestion to make——"

"What's that, fathead?"

"Play me in the Remove team to-day. It will mean a big win for Greyfriars."

"You silly owl!" roared Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know——"

The captain of the Remove turned angrily away. He tried to clear his clouded brow as he met Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his chums in the quad.

"I hear that Gussy has been scattering his giddy jewellery around as usual," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Heard anything of it yet?" asked Tom Merry.

Wharton shook his head.

"I've been inquiring," he said. "Nothing so far—I can't make it out——"

"Pway don't wowwy, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, placidly. "It will turn up all wight."

"Was there much money in the purse?" asked Harry.

"No, deah boy."

"That's good, anyhow."

"How much was there, Gussy?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Only a fiva——"

"A five-pound note?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yaas, and a few cawweny notes," said Arthur Augustus innocently.

"Oh, my hat!"

Jimmy Silver of Rookwood came sauntering along. He stopped and looked at the juniors, noticing Wharton's concerned face and Bob's worried look with surprise.

"Nothing wrong with the pitch, what?" he asked.

"No," said Harry, with a smile. "Both pitches are right as rain. Some silly owl has been playing a trick on D'Arcy, that's all."

"It is weally nothin'," said Arthur Augustus.

"I can take a joke with anybody. Some

silly ass weckoned he would alarm me by hidin' my watch and chain somewhere, but I assuah you I shall not wowwy about the mattah at all. Pewhaps it was you, Lowthah."

"Fathead!" said Lowther.

"Well, you are a pwaactical jokin' ass, Lowthah—you will admit that."

"Watch and chain missing!" said Jimmy Silver, looking grave. "Chap must be a howling chump to monkey with valuables."

"Never mind! We've got to think about the cwicket now," said Arthur Augustus. "It will turn up."

And the matter, annoying as it was, perforce had to be left at that for the present.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

King Cricket!

HARRY WHARTON dismissed the matter from his mind when the cricketers went down to Little Side. Cricket claimed all his attention now. The Remove won the toss, and batted first. Tom Merry and Co. went into the field. A crowd of fellows gathered round to watch the game.

On the Fourth Form ground, Temple, Dabney and Co. were staring with the Rookwooders. It was a glorious day, and all four teams were in the greatest of spirits. Temple, Dabney and Co. felt their great spirits a little dashed as the morning wore on, however. Cecil Reginald Temple had his plan clear in his mind; he was going to "wallop" Rookwood, while St. Jim's were beating the Remove. That would establish, in a proper way, the proper standing of Temple's eleven. Unfortunately, the facts did not fit in well with the theory; the cricket did not go according to plan. For Rookwood gained the upper hand from the start over the Fourth—and the great Cecil Reginald himself being dismissed by Jimmy Silver for three runs. While, on the Remove ground, a much tougher game of cricket was in progress.

Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith opened the innings for the Remove, and the partnership started well, and it was a long time before it was broken. Tom Merry put on the best bowlers for a time in vain—even Fatty Wynn, the demon bowler of the New House at St. Jim's, seemed unable to touch the wickets.

It was a lucky catch in the field by Talbot of the Shell that dismissed Wharton at last, and not before he had scored forty runs.

The captain of the Remove was loudly cheered by the crowd round the ground. The cheering brought Billy Bunter to the scene, to see what was going on. Billy Bunter indulged in a sniff.

"Wharton out?" he asked, addressing the fellow nearest him, who happened to be Hazeldene.

"Out for forty," said Hazel.

Bunter sniffed again.

"Fat lot of good forty runs," he remarked.

"I should have made eighty at least, against that bowling."

"You silly owl!" said Hazeldene. "You wouldn't have kept up your silly wicket against the first ball."

"Yah!" was the only reply that Billy Bunter could think of to that remark.

Bob Cherry went in to join Smithy. The latter was bowled by Talbot after scoring thirty-five; and Bob Cherry was good for twenty. The Remove were certainly beginning well.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked to Tom Merry as the field crossed over. "They are wathah hot stuff, deah boy."

"They are," admitted Tom.

"Hadn't you better put me on to bowl, Tom Mewwy?"

"I think not," grinned Tom.

"But they are vewy hot stuff——"

"Which is why I am not going to put you on to bowl, old chap."

"Weally, you know——"

Talbot was bowling again, and Fatty Wynn relieved him, and then Blake. The Greyfriars wickets fell a little faster. But the running was still good, the score mounted up. Mark Linley was "not out" at the finish, and the last wicket fell in time for the luncheon interval. The Greyfriars Remove score was a level 120.

It was undoubtedly good work for the first innings; and the Removites were feeling very well satisfied with themselves.

Wharton was rather curious to know how he Fourth had fared; and he soon ascer-

tained. The Fourth had been all down for fifty; and the Rookwood first innings had started with thirty for three wickets. Harry Wharton smiled as he learned the result of the contest so far. He was well aware of Cecil Reginald Temple's ambitions. This did not look as if Cecil Reginald's ambitions would be realised.

After the lunch interval the cricketers resumed play cheerily.

Tom Merry and Talbot opened the game for St. Jim's, and Harry Wharton and his merry men were keen and alert in the field.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Remove's champion bowler, started with his ball, and Tom Merry found that he had all his work cut out to defend his wicket.

He captured two runs on the over, and that was all. And then Squiff bowled to Talbot.

Talbot of the Shell was generally a host in himself, to his side; but the Australian junior's bowling found out a weak spot. To the surprise and dismay of the Saints, Talbot did not live through the over.

He had taken four, when Squiff knocked down his bails, and Talbot, with a rather reddened face, carried his bat back to the pavilion.

"Hard luck, old chap," said Tom Merry, as Talbot passed him.

"Bai Jove, you know, it was weally cwel luck," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as Talbot joined the waiting crowd of batsmen at the pavilion. "Howevah, it will be all wight, Talbot; don't wowwy. I feel in gweat form to-day, and I weally hope to bag a centuwy."

"Minus ninety-nine!" grunted Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Man in!"

"I am weally goin' to supwise these Gweyfwiahs boundahs, you know," said Arthur Augustus, confidently.

"By taking a run?" asked Digby.

"Weally, Dig——"

"Man in! Next man in!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Get a move on, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove! I forgot I was next man in! All wight—comin', deah boys."

"Don't be all day!" bawled Herries.

"Weally, you know——"

Arthur Augustus was ready at last, and he trotted cheerfully on the field to the wicket Talbot had vacated.

He took up his position, and smiled along the pitch. He was quite prepared to knock Squiff's bowling shy-high, or higher.

But the Australian junior was on his mettle. There was a tricky break on the ball that rather puzzled Arthur Augustus. How it happened, the swell of St. Jim's never quite knew; but undoubtedly it did happen that his bat swept the empty air, and that the next second his middle stump was reclining on the ground.

"How's that?" chirruped Squiff.

And the umpire grinned.

"Out!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He stared at his wrecked wicket, and then at the grinning wicket-keeper, and shook his head like one to whom such an extraordinary problem was past understanding. Then he trotted back the way he had come.

"What price duck's eggs?" yelled Billy Bunter.

"Cheap to-day!" chuckled Skinner.

Arthur Augustus coloured a little. The batsmen at the pavilion gave him grim looks. They had not come to the Greyfriars Cricket Week as collectors of duck's eggs.

"That was wathah wemarkable, wasn't it, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus, as Blake went on to the wicket.

"Yes, wasn't it?" said Monty Lowther, sarcastically. "I really thought you'd take one run."

"I fully intended to bag a centuwy——"

"Which would have taken you about a century!" remarked Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs——"

"Bad luck, old fellow," said Talbot.

"It was not exactly bad luck, Talbot. It was a weally most wemarkable fluke," explained Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah in that wemark, my deah fellows," said the swell of St. Jim's mildly. "I do not want to cwiticise the umpiah, of course; but weally

such a feahful fluke ought hardly to count. Howevah, I am out, and the first innin's has gone to pot."

"It's barely possible that some of the other fellows may bag a run or two," suggested Monty Lowther, still sarcastic.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry was going strong again. When Blake's wicket went down, Figgins joined the St. Jim's junior skipper, and between them Tom Merry and George Figgins made the fur fly, so to speak. The St. Jim's fellows had been unlucky to begin with, but they were making up for it now. It was a good time before another wicket fell, and Tom Merry had forty-eight to his credit when he was at last clean bowled by Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's lookin' up," remarked Arthur Augustus, with a glance at the figures. "Ninety-six already—we shall beat them on the first innin's, ahtah all—and that is weally wemarkable, considerin' that I have contwibuted nothin' to the score."

"Only a big round 0," said Blake.

"Wait till you see me in the second innin's to-morrow, old chap," said Arthur Augustus confidently.

"Two centuries will be due to-morrow," remarked Monty Lowther gravely. "The one that didn't come off to-day, and the one that won't come off to-morrow."

"Weally, Lowthah——"

There was a cheer from the St. Jim's fellows when the score topped the hundred, with three wickets yet to fall. The tail of the innings brought in twenty-one runs, so that St. Jim's finished one ahead of the Remove—with a total of 121.

By that time the shadows were lengthening on the green sward, and Tom Merry and Harry Wharton decided not to begin the Greyfriars second innings till the next morning. They strolled off the field together in the sunset, both of them well satisfied with the day's play, and both pretty confident with regard to the morrow. On the other ground, the Fourth Form and Rookwood match was still going on, and the two skippers stopped to watch it. Jimmy Silver and Lovell were at



There was a cheer when the St. Jim's score topped the hundred, with three wickets yet to fall.
(See opposite page)

the wickets, and Temple and Co. looked rather red and breathless in the field. The Rookwooders wore smiling faces—and Wharton was not surprised when Jimmy Silver declared the innings at an end. Rookwood were 150 for seven wickets—against the Fourth Form score of fifty. Temple, Dabney and Co. sidled away unostentatiously to hide their blushes; and Jimmy Silver joined Wharton and Tom Merry.

“We sha’n’t be very busy to-morrow,” Jimmy Silver remarked, with a smile. “I don’t think we shall have to bat again.”

“We’ll give you some harder work when you play us,” said Harry Wharton, laughing.

Jimmy Silver nodded and smiled, and went into the pavilion. He came out soon afterwards, with a rather curious expression on his face, and looked round. Harry Wharton was still on the ground, chatting with Tom Merry and D’Arcy and some other fellows, and the Rookwooder came across to him. His serious expression drew general attention.

“Anything up?” asked Harry.

“Yes, a little,” said Jimmy Silver quietly. “I think your practical joker has been at work again.”

“Wha-at?”

“I—I suppose it’s a joke,” said Jimmy, though his face did not exactly bear out his

words. "Anyhow, somebody's been through my jacket in the dressing-room, and taken something out of the pocket. I wouldn't have mentioned it—but—but—the same thing's happened to Lovell—and to Mornington. Somebody's made a clean sweep, and there's some currency notes missing. I thought you'd better know."

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

The Unknown Hand!

"**B**AI JOVE!"

Tom Merry and Co. looked very uncomfortable. The Rookwooders who heard Jimmy Silver's words looked very uncomfortable, too. But their feelings were nothing to Wharton's.

The captain of the Remove turned quite pale.

The purloining of D'Arcy's watch might be attributed to some foolish practical joker. During the keen interest of the day's play, Wharton had almost forgotten the occurrence—though he intended to look into it as soon as the cricket was off his mind. But the picking of pockets in the pavilion could scarcely be called a practical joke. If it was not theft, it was so like theft that it was difficult to find any distinction.

"You—you're sure?" stammered Wharton at last.

"I shouldn't be likely to say such a thing without making sure first," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I—I suppose it isn't possible that some stranger could have got into the place?"

Wharton shook his head. A good many strangers had dropped in to see the play—people from the village and the country-side, as often happened. But it was not likely that a stranger could have penetrated into the pavilion without being observed. Besides, there was the affair of D'Arcy's watch overnight. That, certainly, could not have been the work of an outsider—and it was pretty clear that the same hand had been at work.

"Not likely," said Harry. "It—it's somebody on the spot. What's been lost?"

"About five pounds in all—in currency notes, and Morny's silver penknife, and one or two little things like that."

"Somebody must have sneaked into the

pavilion while all the fellows were keen on watching the game," remarked Arthur Edward Lovell. "If—if—if it was only a joke——"

He paused.

"It wasn't a joke," said Bob Cherry. "That's rot!"

"I can't think it was anything worse," said Jimmy Silver, hesitating.

"Imposs., deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gently. "We cannot imagine for a moment that there is such a howwid thing as a thief at Gweyfwiahs."

"I say, you fellows——" Bunter rolled up.

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter," snapped Bob Cherry, for once irritable.

Bunter blinked at him indignantly, but he did not buzz off.

"I say, you fellows, I want to ask you something. Has anybody seen my gold watch?"

"Your watch?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes, my twenty-five guinea gold watch, you know——"

"Do you mean your tenpenny rolled-gold turnip?" growled Bob.

"I mean my splendid gold watch!" roared Bunter. "It's been pinched, and I want to know who took it."

"Bai Jove!"

"Do you mean to say you've lost your watch?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, I do. I took my waistcoat off because it was so jolly warm, you know," explained Bunter. "I hung it on the back of a seat, and forgot about it. When I went back for it I found that the watch and chain had been taken out. I want to know who did it."

"This is getting rather serious," remarked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah."

"I can't afford to lose that watch, you fellows," said Bunter, blinking at the juniors. "It cost my pater thirty guineas, and then there was the chain. If you've got it, Wharton——"

"I!" roared Wharton.

"Well, somebody's got it," argued Bunter. "If you've got it, Bob Cherry——"

"Do you want to be squashed into a fat

jelly?" demanded Bob Cherry sulphurously.

"I want my watch, that's what I want. If it ain't found, I'm jolly well going to the police-station about it," howled Bunter truculently.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wefuse to believe that anything has been stolen at all. It is weally too howwid to believe anythin' of the kind. I wepeat that there is nothin' like a thief at Gweyfwiahs."

"At Greyfriars very likely," snorted Bunter. "But there's a lot of chaps here now who don't belong to Greyfriars."

"Bai Jove!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Well, look at it sensibly," said Bunter coolly. "There wasn't anything missing before this crowd came——"

"Will you shut up?"

"Of course, I don't mean to say that you bagged my watch, D'Arcy——"

"Gweat Scott!"

"You've lost a watch yourself, I know. It can't be Jimmy Silver, either, as he's been robbed, too——"

"Thanks," said Jimmy Silver sarcastically.

"Not at all, old fellow—you've been robbed, and that clears you. But it might have been Tom Merry——"

"What?"

"Or Figgins——"

"Me!" stuttered Figgins.

"Or Wynn——"

Fatty Wynn blinked at Billy Bunter.

"Or Erroll, or Raby, or Newcome, or——yaroooooooh!" Bunter's list of possible suspects was interrupted. Bob Cherry took him by the back of the neck and shook him vigorously. The fat junior gasped and spluttered in Bob's powerful grasp.

"Yurrrgh! Leggo! Beast! Help! Murder! Fire!"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

"Gug-gug-gug!" gurgled Bunter. "Leggo, you beast! I don't say it was—ow!—you—perhaps it was Smithy—yow!—or Tom Brown—groogh! If you shake me like that, you beast—groogh!—you'll make my specs fall off—yow-ow—and if they get broken—grooogh—you'll have to p-p-pay for them! Wooooop!"

Bump!

Bunter sat down in the grass with a heavy concussion, and roared.

"There, you fat rotter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Now shut up."

"Yarooooh!"

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed D'Arcy warmly. "Your insinuations, Buntah, are in the vewy worst of taste."

"Yow-ow-ow!" Bunter spluttered, and blinked up at the angry juniors through his big spectacles. "Look here—ow! I want my watch, and Gussy wants his watch—and Jimmy wants his currency notes. That blessed thief's got to be found. I propose that Tom Merry and Silver and all the rest shall be searched——"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry flushed crimson.

"You fat rotter!" he exclaimed.

"I should certainly wefuse to be searched," exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "If you fellows think for one moment——"

"Nothing of the kind," exclaimed Harry Wharton hastily. "Don't take any notice of Bunter. The fat idiot wants kicking."

"And I'll jolly well give him what he wants!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully.

"Yarooooh!"

Bunter roared, as Bob suited the action to the word. He rolled away in the grass, picked himself up, and fled.

But his words had left great discomfort behind. To suspect that there was a thief among the cheery juniors who had come over to Greyfriars for the Cricket Week was impossible to Wharton—but to suspect that there was a thief in the school itself was equally repugnant. And Bunter had made one statement that had stuck, as it were—certainly there had been nothing missing before the cricketers arrived from St. Jim's and Rookwood. There was a cloud over the happy gathering now.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Wharton has a Brain-Wave!

"IT'S awfully rotten!"

Bob Cherry made that remark in No. 1 Study a little later. The Famous Five were gathered there without any visitors.

Both parties of visitors realised that the five were going to consult over the mysterious thefts that had taken place, and tactfully left them to themselves. It was rather a dismal gathering in No. 1 Study.

"The rottenfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head. "There is an esteemed and ridiculous thief somewhere."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I suppose it comes to that!" he said slowly. "We can't imagine that the biggest fool going would carry a silly practical joke so far. The things have been stolen."

"Looks like it!" grunted Bob Cherry, dismally.

"It's pretty clear," said Frank Nugent. "And the question is, who did it, and how are we going to bowl him out?"

"I—I thought of Bunter," muttered Harry. "But fool as he is, he isn't a thief. Besides——"

"Well?"

"Well," said Harry, colouring a little, "there's been money taken, both last night and this afternoon. I've asked Mrs. Mible in the tuck shop, and Bunter hasn't bought anything there to-day. When he has any money, you know where he goes. It hasn't gone there."

"Besides, his own watch was taken," said Nugent. "It wasn't worth much, but the thief may have supposed it was real gold."

"Not a Greyfriars fellow," said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's rolled-gold watch is a standing joke in the school."

"That's true!"

Wharton shifted uncomfortably.

"If there's a thief about the place, I don't see that we're bound to conclude that he belongs to our own school," he said. "Just as likely to—to—to——"

He broke off.

"That's rather a horrid idea," said Nugent, in a low voice. "It's pretty rotten to suspect any of the St. Jim's chaps, or the Rookwooders——"

"I don't—but if there's a thief, he's as likely to belong to St. Jim's or Rookwood as to Greyfriars."

"I suppose that's so."

"Bunter's babbling about going to the police-station," said Bob. "Of course, we can't have that. We couldn't have such a disgrace——"

"The disgracefulness would be terrific——"

"No fear!" said Harry Wharton, decidedly. "That would be too beastly. We've got to nail the rotter ourselves somehow."

"But—but how——"

The captain of the Remove made a hopeless gesture.

"Blessed if I know!" he said. "We've got to think of something, that's all."

"What a rotten thing to happen!" said Bob, dismally. "It's spoiling our cricket week."

Wharton set his lips.

"We'll make the rotter squirm, when we do find him," he said.

"I—I say, if it goes on, we shall have to tell Mr. Quelch, or the Head," said Johnny Bull. "It can't be kept very dark. All the Lower School knows it already. I saw Skinner and his pals cackling over it. Bunter has been jawing it up and down the school. It'll get to the prefects soon."

"I'm afraid it's got to the prefects already," said Harry. "I noticed Wingate giving us a look as we came in——"

"Oh, rotten!" groaned Bob Cherry. "What a kybosh for our cricket week—to have the Head holding an inquiry for a thief!"

"It mayn't come to that yet. It—it may turn out to be some idiotic practical joke after all——"

"Not likely."

"Well, I know it isn't likely," confessed Wharton. "I—I—I wish I could think of some way——"

He knitted his brows in thought.

"My hat!" he ejaculated, suddenly.

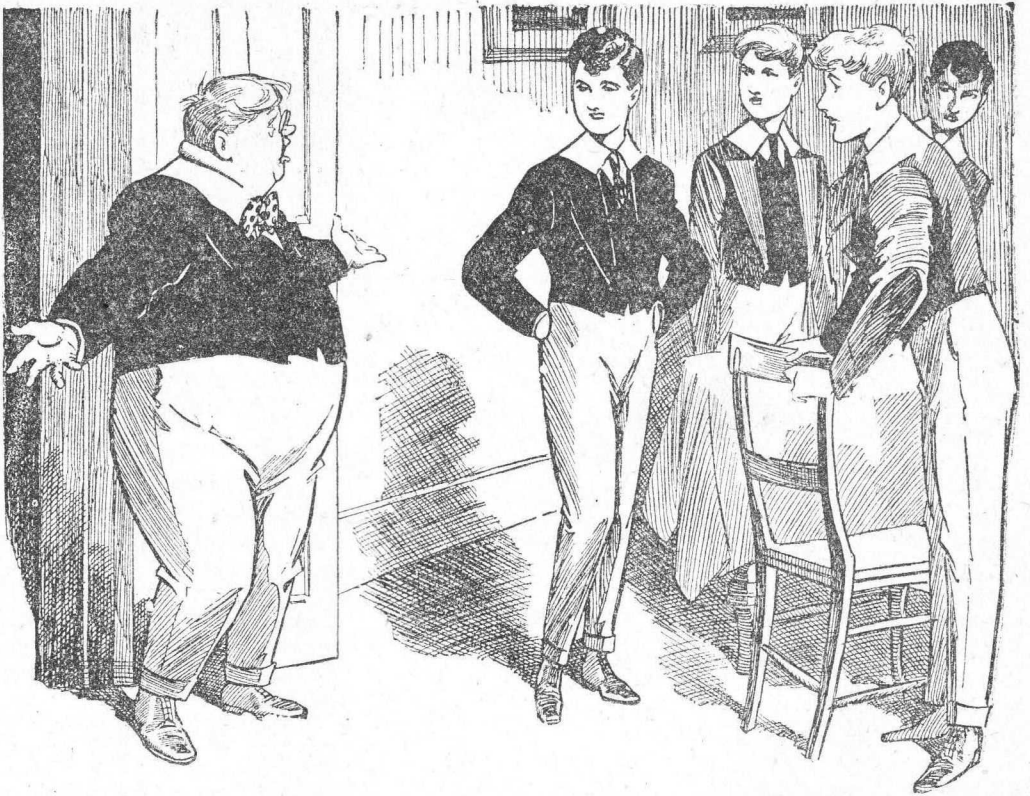
"Thought of anything?" asked Bob, hopefully.

"Yes. Jack Drake."

"Drake! What about Drake?"

Harry Wharton jumped up with excitement in his face.

"Drake's at Folkestone now," he said. "That's not so jolly far away. If he could



"I don't want any rot!" roared Bunter. "Where's my thirty-five guinea gold watch? I'm going to the police-station about these thefts"! (See page 94)

run over here. You know he's working with Ferrers Locke, and he's no end of a detective——"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bob, in great relief. "If he could come——"

"But you asked him, and he couldn't!" said Nugent doubtfully.

"That was to play cricket. This is quite a different matter. I'll ring up Mr. Locke, and tell him about the thefts, and ask him if Drake can come over to investigate," exclaimed Harry, greatly taken with his new idea. "After all, that's his business, as a detective, you know—and Drake could happen in simply as an old Greyfriars chap, without being suspected of playing the detective. He could keep his eyes open while we're playing cricket. Ten to one he would nail the rotter who's giving us all this trouble."

There was a general brightening of faces in No. 1 Study.

"Good for you, old chap," exclaimed Bob Cherry, heartily. "It's a regular brain-wave. I——"

Bob broke off, as the door of No. 1 Study was thrown open, without a knock, and Billy Bunter rolled in. The Famous Five did not give him welcoming glances. But Bunter did not heed. His manner was full of confidence.

"I say, you fellows——" he began.

"Get out!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I'll get out fast enough!" said Bunter, disdainfully. "I rather fancy you'll make me stay, in a minute. I've come here to put it to you plain. My watch has been stolen."

"Bother your rolled-gold turnip," snorted Johnny Bull.

"My splendid thirty-five guinea watch!" went on Bunter. "The one my pater gave me as a birthday present, you know, with a chain that cost fifteen guineas. Well, I'm not a millionaire, and I can't afford to lose that watch. I don't know what my pater would do if he heard I'd lost it——"

"Perhaps he would drop into the nearest second-hand shop, and buy you one for eightpence!" suggested Johnny Bull. "Then you'd have one the same value exactly——"

"I don't want any rot!" roared Bunter. "I've dropped in to tell you chaps that I'm going to the police-station about these thefts."

"You're not!"

"I am—I want my watch and D'Arcy wants his watch, and Jimmy Silver wants his money. I'm going to tell the inspector the whole story, and let him pick out the thief among the Rookwooders or St. Jim's fellows, whichever it may be——"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five gave Bunter basilisk glares. Such a proceeding on his part was, strictly speaking, within his rights; but it would have been a ghastly disaster in the Greyfriars Cricket Week. The thought of a policeman "nosing" among the Greyfriars guests looking for a thief made the chums of the Remove feel quite sick.

"Well, I mean it," said Bunter. "My gold watch——"

"Look here," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We're going to take some measures to get the things back, Bunter. We don't want the matter shouted from the house-tops till we've done all we can."

"What do I care?" demanded Bunter, truculently. "You've refused to play me in the Cricket Week. You've treated me scandalously. Making out that I can't play cricket! Now you ask me favours. When I've lost a magnificent gold watch, with check action and jewelled in every hole. Go and eat coke."

"You fat rotter——"

"That's enough!" said Bunter, waving a fat hand, "I'm done with you. I've mentioned before that I despise you! I throw you off! I discard you! I drop your acquaintance! Yah!"

Bunter made a step back to the doorway. Bob Cherry made a step forward, and seized him by his little fat nose.

"Yurrrgggghh!"

"Now just listen!" said Bob.

"Gurrrrggghh!"

"You're not going to the police-station," said Harry, savagely. "If you do, we'll scrag you."

"The scragfulness will be terrific."

"Gooooooch!" spluttered Bunter. "Led go by dose."

Bob Cherry released Bunter's nose, and the fat junior rubbed it furiously. The glare he gave the Famous Five almost cracked his spectacles.

"Oh! Ow! You awful beasts! Now I'm going——"

"You speak a word outside Greyfriars, and we'll lynch you!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, utterly exasperated. "D'Arcy's lost a real gold watch, and he's not making a song about it. Shut up."

"My lovely gold forty-guinea watch——"

"Cheese it!"

"We want this kept dark, for the sake of everybody, Bunter," said Wharton. "We'll find your dashed watch sooner or later. It's still in Greyfriars somewhere."

"My nose is hurt," roared Bunter.

"Blow your nose!" growled Bob.

"If you fellows ask me civilly, perhaps I could let the matter stand over a time," said Bunter. "You'll have to ask me civilly, though."

Wharton made an effort.

"Well, I do ask you, Bunter," he said.

"If you put it like that, old fellow, I'll do my best for you," said Bunter. "I'll keep it quiet for a day or two, anyhow. I shall expect to be treated decently if I grant you favours like this. Did I mention to you that I was expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning? Could you fellows let me have five bob to-day, and take the postal-order when it comes?"

The Famous Five exchanged glances, glances that were silent but eloquent. Then, without a word, each of the juniors produced a shilling, and the five shillings were dropped into Bunter's fat palm.

Quite an amiable smile appeared on the face of the Owl of the Remove.

"Thanks, old chaps," he said, "I'll do the best I can for you." He turned to the door, but in the doorway he looked back. "I say, you fellows, it's barely possible that the postal-order mayn't come by the first post in the morning. Could you wait till the afternoon in that case?"

"You fat spoofer!" roared Johnny Bull. "Do you think we believe that you're getting a postal-order at all?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, very well, Bull, I'll hand back the five bob——"

"Go and eat coke!"

"And I'll go to the police-station about my watch——"

"Where's my bat?" said Johnny Bull, looking round.

Bunter backed away hurriedly.

"Look here, you fellows, will to-morrow afternoon do if my postal-order doesn't come in the morning? I want that settled. I suppose you don't think I'm the kind of chap to borrow money without intending to square?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"I want this put on a business footing," said Bunter, blinking at them very seriously. "If you don't think I'm going to square, you're practically making me a gift of this five bob. I couldn't accept that! I'm not the sort of fellow to accept money from anybody, I hope. Will it be all right if I settle to-morrow afternoon, Wharton?"

"Oh! Yes," gasped Harry.

"Right-o, then."

Bunter rolled out, that important point being settled. It was really rather difficult to know whether Billy Bunter actually believed in the existence of his celebrated postal order, which was always expected but never arrived. But certainly he liked it to be taken seriously by other fellows.

Johnny Bull breathed hard when the Owl of the Remove was gone.

"I shall brain him some day!" he said, with conviction. "I know I shall."

"The fat brute's got us under his thumb," said Bob Cherry. "Cut off and telephone to

Drake, Harry. I only hope that he will be able to jerk us out of this dashed pickle."

Harry Wharton nodded, and left the study. All the hopes of the chums of the Remove now were centred in Jack Drake, once of the Greyfriars Remove, and now the assistant of the famous Baker Street detective, Ferrers Locke.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Jack Drake to the Rescue!

WINGATE of the Sixth met Wharton in the corridor near the prefects' room. The Greyfriars captain was looking very serious.

"I want to speak to you, Wharton," he said. "Step in here."

Wharton followed the captain of the school into the prefects' room, with a sinking feeling at his heart. He could guess what Wingate wanted to speak about.

There was no one else in the prefects' room just then, and Wingate closed the door. He fixed his eyes on the junior.

"I've heard some chatter about thefts taking place, since your visitors got here, Wharton," he said. "Is there anything in it?"

"I'm afraid so," said Harry reluctantly.

"Tell me what's happened, then."

Wharton explained.

The Sixth-former knitted his brows as he listened.

"This is a pretty serious matter," he said. "It will have to be looked into at once, Wharton. Perhaps you'd better come with me to the Head."

"It's a rotten business, Wingate," said the junior. "In the circumstances, we—we want to keep it as quiet as possible——"

"It can hardly be kept quiet, if it is really a case of theft," said the prefect; "and if it's a silly practical joke, the practical joker wants the hiding of his life."

"I know that! But if there's an official inquiry, it will be awfully uncomfortable for everybody concerned, and it will simply ruin our Cricket Week," said Harry. "I—I was going to ask you to let me use the 'phone here, to get Jack Drake to come——"

"Drake?" Wingate smiled. "The kid

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET



THE MIDNIGHT FEAST

By DICK PENFOLD

A's for the **ANTICS** of chaps in our Form
When drawing up plans for a feast in the
dorm.

B is for **BUNTER**, who's soon wide awake
And stuffing himself with a stunning plum-
cake!

C is for **CANDLES** which light up the scene
As soon as the skipper has cried "All
serene!"

D's for the **DOUGHNUTS**, a shocking old
sham,

You dig like a navvy, but fail to find jam!

E's for the **ENERGY** feasters display
In stowing all manner of good things away.

F is for **FRIARDALE**, where there's a shop
At which we buy hampers and grand ginger-
pop!

G's for the **GRUMBLING** of Bolsover major,
Who swallows meat patties as if for a wager!

H is the **HIDING** which comes in the
morning

When the scout on the landing has failed to
give warning!

I is for **INKY**: with smile beatific
He says that bananas are simply terrific!

J's for **JAM-TARTS**, so delicious to eat,
But the jam will persist in adorning the
sheet.

K's for the **KNIVES** that are smuggled
from Hall:

They're excellent, save that they won't cut
at all!

L is for **LODER**, who creeps up the stairs
In order to catch us, he hopes, unawares.

M's for the **MARMALADE**, tempting and
sweet,
Which somehow or other gets mixed with
the meat.

N's for the **NUTS** which we constantly crack,
Then push the cold shells down Mauleverer's
back.

O's for the **ORANGES**, juicy and nice;
Such excellent dainties go down in a trice.

P's for the **POP** which is spilt on the floor,
And flows in a swift-rushing stream to the
door.

Q is for **QUALMS** which you feel the next day;
Even physic won't take the anguish away.

R's for the **ROPE** which we always shin
down

When taking a midnight excursion to town.

S is the **SNEAK** who puts Quelch on our
track

In order to try and get Wharton the sack.

T is for **TUCK**, packed in glorious hampers,
For which each Removite delightedly
scampers.

U's the **UNSPEAKABLE** feeling of loathing
When treacle flows freely all over your
clothing.

V's for the **VICTIM**, who murmurs in pain:
"I'm dashed if I'll ever touch doughnuts
again!"

W's for **WHARTON**, who's quite a good
chap:

He likes lemonade, and is fond of a scrap.

X is **'XCITEMENT**, of which there's no lack,
Especially when there's a "beak" on the
track!

Y's for the **YELLS** of the fellows who sneak,
They find that they cannot sit down for a
week!

Z's for the **ZEBRA**, which Bunter re-
sembles;

At his gay striped pyjamas the timid soul
trembles.

who used to be in the Remove here, and has become a detective?"

"Yes. I've got the Head's leave to have him here as a guest," said Harry. "He's Ferrers Locke's assistant, and a jolly clever chap. I think he could look into the matter, and settle it, without a lot of scandal, if he was given a chance."

Wingate reflected a moment or two.

"Well, it's not a bad idea," he said. "Least said soonest mended, certainly. Telephone, by all means, and if Drake can come, that may settle the matter."

And with a nod, the captain of Greyfriars left the prefects' room; and Wharton, greatly relieved, went to the telephone.

He called up double-three double-three Folkestone as Drake had directed him, and was put through quickly enough. A deep voice came along the wires. Wharton remembered the voice of Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, who had visited Greyfriars more than once, being a relative of Dr. Locke, the headmaster.

"Is that you, Mr. Locke?" asked Harry.

"Yes. What is wanted?"

"Harry Wharton speaking, from Greyfriars School. Perhaps you remember me, Mr. Locke?"

"Perfectly."

"I wanted to speak to Drake—your assistant, you know. But—I'd better ask you—could Drake come here?"

"Drake has told me about your cricket week," came the detective's reply, "but—"

"It's not cricket I'm thinking of now, sir. That's going on all right. There have been several thefts in the school since the Rookwood and St. Jim's chaps arrived—"

"Ah!"

"Some of the visitors have been robbed, as well as a Greyfriars fellow. It's making us all feel rotten, of course, and we haven't the faintest idea who's at the bottom of it. I thought that perhaps Drake could come along—as a detective—and investigate—"

"Ah! I understand."

"If he can't help us, there will be an inquiry by the Head, and you can guess how rotten that will be, in the circumstances, Mr. Locke."

"Doubtless. Hold on a few moments."

"Yes, sir."

Wharton held the line, and there was silence for nearly a minute. Then a boyish voice he knew well came through.

"Hallo! Are you there, Wharton?"

"Yes, rather, Drake."

"You want me to come along—as a detective?"

"That's it! I suppose Mr. Locke has told you—"

"Yes. As it's a professional matter"—Drake chuckled a little—"I am coming! I'm at work here watching the steamers for a man who's wanted—but Mr. Locke is going to put another chap on the job so that I can come along to Greyfriars and help you out."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Will it be all right if I happen in some time to-morrow?" asked Jack Drake.

"Yes, rather! The sooner the better, of course."

"Then expect me to-morrow."

"Good! About the fees!" said Harry.

"The what?"

"Fees! I suppose you charge fees, or Mr. Locke does, now that you're a private detective?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Drake's laugh rang pleasantly along the wires. "My dear chap, cut that out. I'm going to drop in as your guest for a few days, and help you out—if I can—for the sake of old times. If you say a word about fees I shall jolly well punch your nose."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Then I won't say a word," he answered.

"By the way, we're playing cricket to-morrow, of course; but I'll see that something is sent to the station to meet you, if you come by train—"

"Don't!" said Drake. "Most likely I shall bike over; anyhow, the less fuss the better. Go ahead with the cricket, and if you're busy when I come, I'll hang around and watch the game—and perhaps watch other things, too. Now I must cut off. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, old chap!"

Harry Wharton left the prefects' room feeling very satisfied in his mind. That Jack Drake was quite capable of dealing with the mystery that was casting a shadow over the

Greyfriars Cricket Week, he felt assured. And Drake was coming on the morrow. It was with a lighter heart that the captain of the Remove rejoined his chums in No. 1 Study.

They looked at him eagerly as he entered.

"All serene!" said Harry. "Drake will be here to-morrow."

"Hurrah!"

"No need to mention, of course, that he's here as a detective," said Harry. "I've told Wingate, that's all. Drake will drop in just as an old Greyfriars chap—and I haven't the slightest doubt that he will bowl out the rotter who's bothering us. And if it turns out to be a Greyfriars fellow, we'll jolly well make an example of him."

"Yes, rather."

And the council in No. 1 Study broke up, much relieved in their minds. There was a merry party that evening in the junior common-room, with Monty Lowther at the piano, and Johnny Bull with his concertina, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy obliged with a tenor solo—which, if not exactly of great value as a solo, at least added considerably to the gaiety of the Cricket Week.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

The Second Innings!

"PLAY!"

Wednesday dawned bright and sunny, and in the glorious sunshine, with a day's cricket before them, Harry Wharton and Co. succeeded in dismissing from their minds the troublesome mystery which had haunted them. Stumps were pitched fairly early for the resumption of the St. Jim's and Remove match; both sides realised that there was a long fight ahead. The Rookwooders and the Fourth did not begin so early. Jimmy Silver and Co. had no expectation of having to bat again; and Temple's team were not likely to use up a great part of the day with their second innings. Cecil Reginald Temple, indeed, looked like anything but a conquering hero when he came on the field to face the Rookwood bowling, and the fall of the Fourth-Form wickets was more rapid than gratifying.

But Harry Wharton and Co. had no eyes

for the neighbouring match. They were hard at work with the Saints.

Harry Wharton opened the Greyfriars second innings with Bob Cherry as a partner. Fatty Wynn went on to bowl for St. Jim's David Llewellyn Wynn, however, did not succeed in touching Wharton's wicket, and when the field crossed over, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had something to say to Tom Merry.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy, just a minute."

"Cut it short, Gussy."

"They are standin' up to the bowlin' wathah well, Tom Mewwy."

"They are," assented Tom.

"I suggested yestahday that you should twy me as a bowlah——"

"Lucky I didn't, wasn't it?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Hop into your place, old chap! Don't keep the field waiting!"

"Yaas; but I weally think you had bettah put me on for an ovah," said Arthur Augustus seriously. "A wicket or two now would encourage the fellows no end!"

Tom Merry seemed to have a sudden attack of deafness, for he walked away without replying.

Arthur Augustus shook his head seriously as he took his place. His duck's egg of the previous day had not discouraged him. He was prepared to make a century when his innings came along, and, in the meantime, he was ready to perform hat-tricks galore. But Tom Merry pinned his faith to his own selected bowlers, and Gussy was left to blush unseen, as it were.

It was some time before the bowlers had any luck, but it came at last when Bob Cherry drove the ball into the long field with a mighty drive. A graceful figure was running, with an eyeglass that glimmered in the sun, and all eyes were upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the batsmen crossed and re-crossed. The swell of St. Jim's was putting on a turn of speed that surprised the fellows who had seen him lounging elegantly about the quad., and suddenly he stopped and backed, his eyes skyward, his hand ready; and the ball fairly floated down into his palm.

There was a roar.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Good old Gussy!" roared Blake.

"Bravo, Gustavus!"

"Well caught, sir!"

Arthur Augustus smiled sweetly.

"I wathah think that was all wight!" he remarked.

Bob Cherry did not seem to think so as he carried out his bat. The hardest hitter of the Remove was out for fourteen runs.

"Call that cricket?" Billy Bunter inquired, as Bob came up to the pavilion.

Bob's reply was not in words. He jammed the business end of his bat gently on Bunter's well-filled waist-coat, and the fat junior sat down and did not repeat his impertinent inquiry.

"Hard luck, old bean!" said Vernon-Smith, as he passed Bob, going in. "Give Bunter a kick for me!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away to safer quarters.

Vernon-Smith's luck was not good that morning. The Greyfriars crowd had expected great things of the Bounder, but the glorious uncertainty of the great game of cricket was exemplified once more. Smithy had taken four when he was caught and bowled by Talbot of the Shell, and his face was quite glum as he travelled back to the pavilion, his scarcely used willow under his arm. If Bunter had been there to make unpleasant remarks, the bat would certainly have been used very vigorously; but, fortunately for himself, the Owl of the Remove had gone.

Tom Brown was next man in, and he kept the innings open with Wharton. It was the captain of the Remove who fell next to a ball from Fatty Wynn. After that, as with the Raven's unhappy master, unmerciful disaster followed fast and followed faster.

Squiff and Hazeldene and Mark Linley were dismissed for a few runs each, and faces in the Greyfriars crowd grew longer and longer, and the St. Jim's fellows smiled to one another. Peter Todd had better luck, and

for a time kept up the running with Johnny Bull at the other end. Johnny Bull put in some useful stone-walling, while Peter gave the Saints a considerable amount of exercise in leather-hunting. But Peter Todd was caught out at last by Tom Merry, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took his place.

"Buck up, Inky, old chap!" Wharton whispered, as the Nabob of Bhanipur fastened his pads. "Things don't look very rosy! Let her rip!"

Inky nodded.

"The ripfulness shall be terrific, my esteemed chum, if I can manage it!" he replied.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh could not manage it, however, and he was dismissed by a catch by Figgins of St. Jim's in a very short time. By the time Frank Nugent went in as last man the Remove score stood at ninety. Harry Wharton kept up a cheerful face, but he had no expectation of topping the hundred now. Johnny Bull was still industriously stone-walling, and with a brilliant



All eyes were upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He put on a turn of speed that surprised the fellows, and suddenly he stopped and backed, his eyes skyward, his hands ready; and the ball fairly floated down into his palm. There was a roar.

"Good old Gussy!" (See opposite page)

bat like Smithy or Wharton himself at the other end the innings might yet have been pulled out of the fire. But Frank Nugent, though a useful bat, was not likely to stand up for long against bowling that had downed the mighty men of the Remove.

Wharton's expectations were verified. Nugent lived through two overs, and added four to the score. Then a fast ball from Fatty Wynn knocked out his leg stump, and the innings was over, Johnny Bull "not out."

"Ninety-four!" said Bob Cherry. "Well, that's all right if the Saints only bag ninety-two."

"If!" murmured Hazeldene. "They bagged a hundred and twenty-one in their first innings!"

"We've got to see that they don't bag more than that," said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "It depends on the bowling now."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, go away, Bunter!"

"I'm going to make you an offer," said Billy Bunter. "Tom Merry's rather a sportsman; you know that! Well, tell him candidly that you've made a mistake in the selection of your team, Wharton!"

"What?"

"Own up, like a man," said Bunter. "Ask him to let you off. He's a sportsman; he'll agree. Put me in. You've said yourself that the game depends on the bowling now. With me to bowl——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not joking!" roared Bunter. "I mean it! It's the only way of saving the match! With my splendid bowling——"

"Thanks, old chap!" said Bob Cherry, chuckling. "We wanted a little comic relief at this tragic moment! Thanks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I say, you fellows——"

"Bow-wow!"

Billy Bunter's generous offer was not accepted. As there was still plenty of time before lunch, the St. Jim's crowd started their innings, and when the cricketers knocked off for lunch they stood at twenty for one wicket. And at lunch the spirits of Tom Merry and Co. were high and exuberant, while the Removites were reduced to hoping

against hope. Perhaps they found some consolation, however, in the knowledge that they had done much better than Temple, Dabney and Co. For the Fourth Form match was finished at lunch, and Rookwood were the winners by an innings and fifteen runs. Cecil Reginald Temple did not appear at lunch with the cricketers. Apparently he was hiding his diminished head in seclusion.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Just a Win!

"MARJORIE!"

"And Clara—and Barbara——"

Cricket was about to recommence on Little Side, when the girls arrived from Cliff House. Wednesday afternoon was a half-holiday at Cliff House School, and Hazel had cycled over immediately after lunch to fetch his sister Marjorie and her friends.

The Removites gave them a warm greeting. Marjorie Hazeldene looked very bright and cheery, evidently pleased by the fact that her brother was in the Remove eleven. Miss Clara, and Barbara Redfern, and Mabel were in the best of spirits, and very keen on the cricket; or, at least, they tactfully seemed so. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was glad that it was the St. Jim's innings now. As he was one of the waiting batsmen he had an opportunity of basking in the smiles of Marjorie and Co., which suited him down to the ground. Arthur Augustus always came out into the fullest bloom, so to speak, in the presence of members of the gentle sex.

Tom Merry and Kerr went to the wickets, and Harry Wharton and Co. into the field; but Gussy, keen as he was on the match, was not watching Tom Merry's exploits with the willow. He stood in a graceful attitude beside Marjorie's chair; and Billy Bunter, who was also a squire of dames in his own opinion, regarded him with glances of strong disfavour. Billy Bunter intended to take Marjorie under his wing, but Marjorie Hazeldene did not even seem to see the fat junior. And she was listening with quite a sweet smile to the observations of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

For some reason—quite a mystery to William George Bunter—Arthur Augustus

seemed more popular with the ladies than the Owl of the Remove.

"Wippin' game," Arthur Augustus remarked, in reply to a question from Marjorie. "Gweyfwiahs are weally puttin' up a gweat fight. They are givin' us quite a tussle, in fact."

"But the conclusion is a foregone one, I suppose?" remarked Miss Clara Trevlyn, who was by way of being slightly sarcastic at times. Sarcasm, however, was not likely to be perceived by Arthur Augustus.

"Yaas, wathah!" he answered innocently. "They wan us wathah close in the first innin's, and I told Tom Mewvy plainly that we should have to pull up our socks, you know. But it's all sewene now."

"What's the score?" asked Marjorie.

"We're one down for twenty in the second innings——"

"Two down!" said Monty Lowther. "Kerr's out."

Arthur Augustus glanced round. In his interest in the ladies he had actually omitted to notice that a St. Jim's wicket had fallen!

"Yaas, two down—for twenty——"

"Twenty-six!" said Blake.

"Yaas, twenty-six," said Arthur Augustus. "That's how it stands at pwsent, Miss Marjowie. I do not think we shall wequiah all our wickets."

"The bowling seems rather good," said Miss Clara, "and that was a good catch at cover point."

"Yaas, Gweyfwiahs are not bad in the field," assented Arthur Augustus. "They are all pwetty good, in fact, exceptin' one chap who muffed a catch in the othah innin's. He seemed wathah a duffah."

"Which one was that?" asked Barbara.

"I do not know his name—that chap standin' at mid-off," said Arthur Augustus.

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter.

Miss Clara suppressed a chuckle, and Barbara and Mabel smiled. Marjorie Hazeldene looked straight before her, and Arthur Augustus looked rather puzzled.

"I twust I have not put my foot in it in any way," he remarked after a pause. "Pway do not think I am wunnin' down the wival team, deah gals. I wepeat that they are all wippin' cwicketahs exceptin' that chap——"

"That's Marjorie's brother!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus crimsoned.

There was no doubt that he had put his noble foot in it!

"I weally beg your pardon, Miss Hazeldene," he stammered. "Of course, when I wemarked that he was wathah a duffah, I did not weally mean that he was wathah a duffah, you know, I—I weally meant——"

"Well, he is a duffer," said Billy Bunter. "Wharton ought to have put me in instead of Hazeldene. I told him so."

"Weally, Buntah——"

"Bravo, Hazel!" came a roar from the Greyfriars crowd.

The ball from Manners' bat had fairly settled into the ready palm of Hazeldene of the Remove. It was a good catch, and rather unexpected on the part of Hazel, who really was not quite up to the form of the rest of the team. But he was doing his very best now, and he was doing well. Marjorie's face lighted up, and she clapped her hands, and Arthur Augustus, glad to atone for his error by generous applause to a successful rival, clapped his aristocratic palms with a series of reports like pistol-shots.

"Jollay good!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus heartily. "Poor old Mannahs—out for two! That's vewy hard luck."

"Well caught!" exclaimed Miss Clara.

"Bravo!"

Hazel looked round with a flushed and pleased face. Manners was going out, looking a little glum.

"Looks as if you may want your wickets after all," Miss Clara remarked to Arthur Augustus, with a mischievous smile.

"Yaas, it is quite possible," said Arthur Augustus amiably. "Cwicket is a most uncertain game."

"There was only one duck's egg yesterday!" remarked Billy Bunter, perhaps with the idea of being very agreeable to the visitor. Arthur Augustus coloured and coughed.

"Who bagged it?" asked Miss Clara.

"D'Arcy."

"Oh!"

"It was a vewy wemarkable fluke," said

Arthur Augustus. "That is the one drawback of cwicket—the wemarkable flukes that sometimes occur in the most unexpected way——"

"Especially when you're at the wicket, old top," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"They're going strong," Billy Bunter remarked. "I fancy Wharton will be sorry yet that he left out his best bowler."

Tom Merry and Co. were certainly making the "far" fly. They wanted ninety-four to win, ninety-three to tie, on their second innings, and the Greyfriars fellows looked grave when the board showed fifty for five wickets. It was still five wickets when the score was at sixty. Then Figgins went down, and Talbot of the Shell added only ten when he was cleverly caught by Harry Wharton.

"Seventy for seven wickets!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, thoughtfully. "I twust I shall make the score look a little bwightah."

"Man in!"

"Weady, deah boy."

"Now look out for a big round nought!" chuckled Billy Bunter.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not deign to hear that remark. He walked out gracefully to the vacant wicket. Tom Merry was still batting; he seemed impregnable to the home bowling. Arthur Augustus gave him a reassuring smile as he passed him.

"Wely on me, old top," he remarked.

"Don't run me out," said Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"The field's waiting, old man: get along."

"I was goin' to suggest, Tom Mewwy, that you should put in some solid stone-wallin'——"

"Eh?"

"And leave the wun-gettin' to me, deah boy. Do you think that is wathah a good ideah?" asked Arthur Augustus, innocently.

The St. Jim's junior skipper gave his hopeful follower a look. But Arthur Augustus, like Brutus of old, had paused for a reply.

"What do you think, old bean?" he inquired.

"I think you'd better get along, before I brain you with this bat," said Tom Merry.

"Weally, you know——"

Tom made a motion with the bat; and the

swell of St. Jim's walked on to his wicket. Vernon-Smith took the bowling, and Arthur Augustus found all his work cut out for him to defend his sticks. The Bounder gave him plenty to do, and Gussy, somewhat to his astonishment, found himself reduced to the stone-walling he had recommended to Tom Merry. It was a relief to the rest of the Saints when he lived through the over, and the bowling came to Tom Merry again.

But Tom's long spell of luck was broken, with the next ball from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. His middle stump went, and there was a delighted crow from the Greyfriars crowd.

"How's that?"

"Out!" chuckled Miss Clara, clapping her hands. "Now then; seventy for eight wickets. We shall do it yet."

Miss Clara spoke quite as if she were a Greyfriars fellow herself.

"Wouldn't be much doubt about the result, if I were on the bowling crease," remarked Billy Bunter. "I offered, too."

Miss Clara looked at him.

"Did Wharton decline your services?" she asked, with an air of astonishment.

"Yes, he did! You'd hardly believe it, would you?" said Bunter, greatly comforted by finding a sympathiser at last. "But he did!"

"What could possibly have been his reason?" asked Clara with almost owl-like gravity.

Bunter sniffed.

"Sheer jealousy," he explained.

Miss Clara shook her head.

"I think there was another reason," she remarked.

"What's that?"

"Perhaps Wharton didn't want to make St. Jim's a present of the match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at Miss Clara through his big spectacles. He realised now that that lively young lady had been pulling his fat leg.

"Oh, really, Miss Clara——"

"Well caught, Hazel!" roared the Greyfriars crowd.

Marjorie clasped her hands delightedly. Hazel had caught out Monty Lowther, and



Billy Bunter regarded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with glances of strong disfavour. For some reason or other, Arthur Augustus seemed more popular with the ladies than the Owl of the Remove did!
(See page 100)

St. Jim's were nine down for seventy-eight. There were bright smiles in the Greyfriars crowd now. Things were looking up for the Remove. Jimmy Silver and Co., mingled with the Greyfriars crowd now that their own game was over, cheered as loudly as any.

"Last man in!"

Fatty Wynn joined Arthur Augustus at the wickets. D'Arcy was at the pavilion end, and the fat Fourth Former stopped to speak to him.

"Where's your giddy century?" he asked.

"Weally, Wynn——"

"You've bagged four so far——"

"Pway twy to keep the innings open, deah boy, and I will bag the othah ninety-six."

Fatty Wynn grinned.

"We only want sixteen to win," he said. "We've had hard luck; but if you don't play the goat, we'll pull through. None of your blessed swank now."

"Weally, you ass——"

"Man in!" roared Tom Merry.

David Llewellyn Wynn trotted on to his place. Wynn was a wonderful bowler, but not conspicuous as a batsman; he contented himself chiefly with stopping the balls that were sent to him. The bowling came to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy again, and feeling that the result of the match depended upon his efforts, the swell of St. Jim's let the leather have it, so to speak. He hit the ball for four, and for four again, and there was a buzz among his comrades when the board

announced eighty-six. Then came a two, and another two, and a single, and Fatty Wynn added another single for the last ball of the over.

"Ninety-two!" murmured Tom Merry to his comrades. "We'll do it yet. Only one wanted to tie—two to win."

"Ninety-two!" murmured Harry Wharton to his comrades. "We'll do it yet! They still want one to tie—two to win."

Fatty Wynn had the bowling now, and the eyes of all Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood watched him as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went on to bowl. The Nabob of Bhanipur put all he knew into it; but Fatty Wynn stopped ball after ball, with phlegmatic calm. The over was a blank, and there were tense looks on the faces of the Greyfriars field as they crossed over. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had the bowling again, and all eyes were fixed upon the graceful figure of the swell of St. Jim's.

The ball came down from Squiff, and there was a clack as the bat met it and sent it on its journey. The batsmen ran—but a sturdy figure leaped fairly into the air in the field—a palm closed on the ball hot from the bat, and there was an almost frenzied roar from all Greyfriars.

"Well caught, Bob Cherry!"

"Oh, well caught, sir!"

Bob Cherry gripped the ball, grinning with satisfaction. It went up straight as a die from his hand, to be caught again.

"How's that, umpire?" roared the crowd.

"Out!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had quite a singular expression on his face as he walked home. Miss Clara met him with a sweet smile.

"You did require all your wickets, after all," she remarked.

"Oh! Ah! Yaas!" stammered Arthur Augustus. "Yaas, wathah."

"Close thing, old chap," said Tom Merry, as Harry Wharton came out of the field, "but a miss is as good as a mile, and you've beaten us by one run. Jolly good game, anyhow."

"Jolly close thing!" said Billy Bunter, with a sniff. "Wharton ought to have played

me. I don't believe in running these risks with matches."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked round in search of Marjorie, intending to take that charming young lady in to tea, and bestow the priceless boon of his company and conversation upon her there. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was already walking off between Miss Marjorie and Miss Clara, and Bunter was left once more. He headed for Barbara—only to see Babs snatched up under his eyes, as it were, by Jimmy Silver of Rookwood—and when he blinked round for Mabel, Mabel was already captured by Tom Merry. And Billy Bunter gave a discontented grunt, and rolled away all on his lonely own, but he indemnified himself at the festive board. Whosoever had distinguished himself on the cricket ground, there was no doubt that, at tea, William George Bunter was an easy first.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

The Detective on the Case!

"ROOM for a little one?"

A pleasant voice asked that question at the doorway of No. 1 Study. It was some time after tea, and the Cliff House guests had gone home, escorted by Hazel and Bob Cherry, Jimmy Silver and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Harry Wharton and Co., with the exception of Bob, were in the study, and Tom Merry was there, and all of them were looking worried. Their worried faces, in fact, made quite a contrast to the cheery countenance that looked in at the doorway.

"Drake!" exclaimed Nugent.

Wharton jumped up.

"Thank goodness, you've come, Drake!" he exclaimed.

He shook hands heartily with the boy detective. Tom Merry regarded him rather curiously.

"You met this chap when you were here before, Merry, I think?" said Harry. "Jack Drake, you know; he was in the Remove, then."

"I remember," said Tom, shaking hands with Drake. "Glad to see you again. From what Wharton tells me, you've come along to help us out of a rotten sort of scrape."

Drake nodded.

He looked very fit and well, and cheerful. It was evident that Ferrers Locke's assistant was very glad to find himself among his old schoolfellows once more.

"I wish I could have turned up for the cricket," he said. "I suppose the first match is over now. How did it go?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Greyfriars beat us by a run," he said. "We're going to take it out of the Fourth, to get even."

"Well, I'm jolly glad the old school came out ahead," said Jack Drake. "If I hang on long enough, Wharton, I hope I shall see you wallop Rookwood."

"Not in your lifetime," said a cheery voice at the door, and Jimmy Silver came in with Bob Cherry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, is that Drake?" exclaimed Bob. "You chaps haven't met him, I think—terrific famous character——"

"Draw it mild," said Drake, smiling.

"No end of a big gun in detective circles," said Bob. "Assistant to Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, and the terror of evil-doers."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, with great interest. "I am vewy pleased to meet you, Dwake. It must be wippin' to be a weal detective. I have often thought that I had wathah a gift that way myself."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Weally, Silvah——"

"Gussy's good at detecting the latest thing in neckties, at all events," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Shut the door, Bob," said Wharton. "Now we're all here, let's get to business. Drake has arrived in the nick of time, really."

"Anything fresh happened since you telephoned?" asked Drake, taking the chair Nugent pulled out for him.

"Yes—and it's rottener than ever," said Harry. "Our cricket week is only half through, and it looks like being mucked up completely by the rotter that's bagging people's things. Miss Hazeldene—you remember Marjorie?"

"Yes, rather."

"Well, she was here to see the finish of the match," said Harry. "At tea she missed her bag—the what-d'ye-call-it she carries on her wrist, you know——"

"Dorothy bag?" said Drake.

"Yes. She had hung it on her chair at the pavilion while she was watching the game, but it wasn't there when it was looked for. It had been—been——"

"Pinched!" said Bob Cherry.

"Anything valuable in it?" asked Jack Drake.

"Only a few shillings, and a handkerchief, Marjorie says," answered Wharton. "But the bag itself is rather valuable, I believe. Anyhow, it's been collared."

Bob Cherry clenched a pair of formidable fists.

"I want to get within hitting distance of the skunk that pinched it!" he said sulphurously. "I want to alter his features for him. You've got to find him out for us, Drake."

"I'll try," said Drake.

"Pway wely on me to assist you, Dwake, if I can do anythin' to help!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Certainly, old chap," said Drake, with a smile.

"All you weally wequiah, I think, is a clue," said Arthur Augustus, brilliantly. "Havin' obtained a clue, you follow it up, you know, and lay your fingah on the wascal. What?"

"Just that," agreed Drake. "Easy as falling off a form—if you obtain the clue, and if you follow it up successfully."

"Yaas, wathah."

Drake glanced round the study.

"Is it generally known that I've come here to look for the pincher?" he asked.

"No—only the chaps here know, as well as Blake and Talbot and Lowther and Manners," said Wharton. "They've been warned to keep mum."

"Good! Of course, it gives a chap a better chance if the thief doesn't know there's a detective at his elbow."

"I thought of that. Most of the fellows suppose that you've just dropped in for the cricket week, as an old Greyfriars fellow."

"That's good."

"Yaas, wathah! You can't be too careful, you know," remarked Arthur Augustus, with a sage nod of his noble head. "I twust all you youngstahs will be vewy careful to keep it dark."

"Fathead!" remarked Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Dry up a bit, Gussy, and let's get to business," suggested Tom.

"Bai Jove!"

"Perhaps, first of all, you'd better give me an outline of what's happened so far," said Drake. "You give it, Wharton, and the other chaps chip in if you leave anything out."

"Right-o!"

Harry Wharton proceeded to give the boy detective a succinct account of the mysterious happenings during the Greyfriars Cricket Week. Jack Drake listened with careful attention, making a note every now and then in his pocket-book and occasionally putting in a question. His quiet, business-like way made a good impression on the juniors.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy watched him with keen interest, his eyeglass being glued, as it were, to the calm, quiet face of Ferrers Locke's boy assistant. Evidently Gussy was deeply interested in seeing a "real live detective" at work.

When the captain of the Remove had finished his narrative, with the help of occasional details from the other fellows present, all eyes were fixed inquiringly upon Jack Drake.

Drake's face was very thoughtful.

Perhaps some of the juniors hoped to hear him offer an elucidation of the mystery on the spot. If so, they were disappointed. Drake read over the notes he had written, and his brow wrinkled in thought. He had a list of the missing articles, and the circumstances in which they had disappeared; but whether he was in possession of a clue to the thief or not, Harry Wharton and Co. could not guess.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, at last, "how does it strike you, Drake? Any idea who the rotter is?"

"Can you tell us the colour of his eyebrows, from the size of the gold watch he pinched?" asked Jimmy Silver, humorously.

"I don't think my gifts are quite so extensive as that," he answered. "I'm afraid I can say no more than that I'll take the matter in hand, and keep my eyes wide open, and nail the rotter if it's possible. And I haven't very much doubt that it's possible."

"That's all we can expect, of course," said Wharton. "I've a lot of confidence in you, Drake; but if you don't succeed, it can't be helped. We shall know you've done all you can for us."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Is it what you'd call a difficult case?" asked Tom Merry.

The boy detective shook his head.

"I think not—very," he answered. "The big point is that the thief is still on the spot, and only waiting to be picked out."

"Among two hundred and fifty fellows," said Bob Cherry, ruefully.

"But most of the two hundred and fifty are above suspicion," remarked Nugent. "That lets out a lot."

"Bai Jove! I should wegard the whole lot as above suspicion," said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head.

"Well, the rotter must be here, so there's at least one chap who isn't above suspicion," said Drake.

"Yaas, that's so, bai Jove!"

The study door opened, and Billy Bunter blinked in.

"I say, you fellows, if you're having supper here, I don't mind joining you. Hallo, is that you, Drake?"

"Little me," said Drake, eyeing the fat junior rather curiously.

"Jolly glad to see you, old chap," said Bunter effusively. "I dare say you remember that you owed me ten bob when you left Greyfriars, Drake."

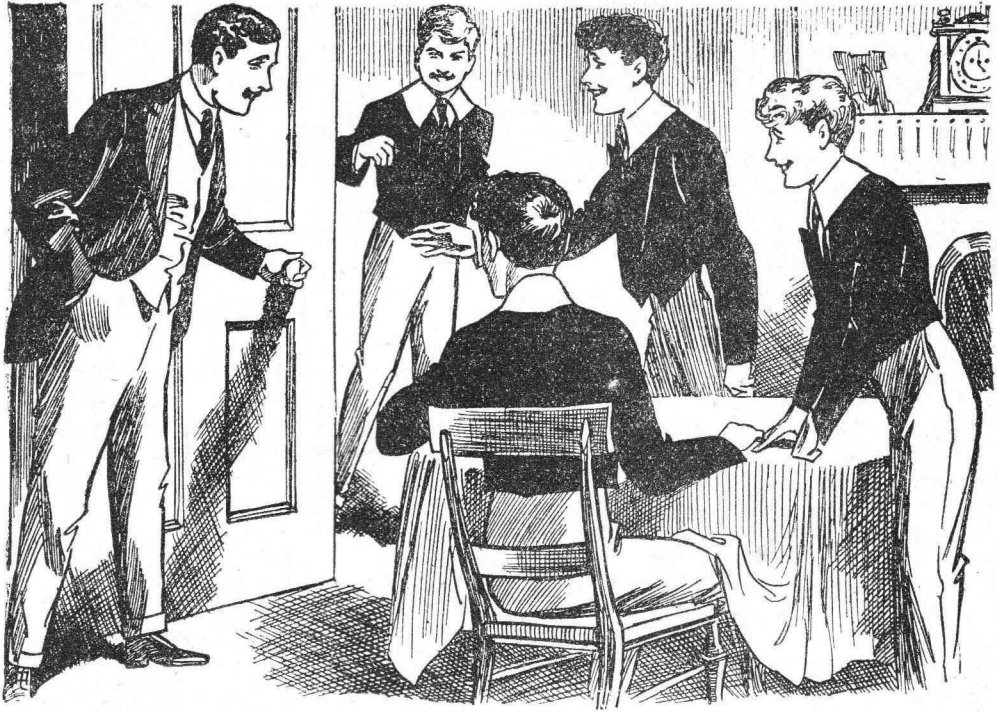
"Not quite."

"Good opportunity to square, now that you've dropped in," said Bunter.

"I remember that you owed me a good many bobs, you fat bounder," answered Drake. "Good opportunity for you to square."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll that porpoise out!" growled Johnny Bull.



"Drake!" exclaimed Nugent. Wharton jumped up. "Thank goodness you've come, Drake!" he exclaimed. (See page 104)

"If you don't want me to supper, Bull, I shall go at once, of course," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "In fact, I'm thinking of taking a walk down to the village before lock-up. On consideration, I really think I ought to let the police know about the loss of my splendid gold watch——"

"You can stay to supper, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, in a suppressed sort of voice.

"Certainly, old chap, as you're so pressing," said Bunter, cordially.

And he stayed.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

Trouble!

JACK DRAKE'S arrival was a great relief to Harry Wharton and Co. They felt it so, the next day, when they were able to devote themselves to the great business of cricket, leaving the mystery to the thefts in the capable hands of Ferrers Locke's assistant.

That mystery was growing a more and

more irritating one. After what had happened, nobody felt that his personal possessions were quite safe, and the need of exercising care over watches and purses and so forth was extremely irritating in itself. And the total absence of any clue to the thief was the cause of suspicion and distrust on all sides.

Some of the Rookwooders had been heard to remark that they had come to Greyfriars to play cricket, not to have their currency notes "pinched"; and, in return, some of the Greyfriars fellows had observed that "pinching" had been quite unheard of there before the Rookwooders arrived. A state of tension was growing up, and it seemed probable that it would increase, and that the cricket week might not end without actual fisticuffs in some cases. Most of the cricketers were very keen to keep the peace, and to pour oil on the troubled waters; but there were fellows who were not at all keen on

anything of the kind, and they made mischief. Skinner and Co. seemed to find a peculiar pleasure in adding to the trouble, and a rumour that D'Arcy's gold watch had been found in Jimmy Silver's cricket-bag was suspected to have emanated from Skinner. Then there was another rumour, that some of Jimmy's missing currency notes had been changed at the tuck-shop by Tom Merry or Monty Lowther.

Such rumours were easily proved unfounded; but they added to the tension, and all parties realised that unless the mystery was solved soon, the Greyfriars cricket week would be anything but the happy event the fellows had been looking forward to.

Indeed, on Thursday morning, Arthur Edward Lovell, of Rookwood, was seen bathing a set of barked knuckles, and Snoop of the Remove was observed to wear a larger size in noses than was his custom. And a connection was suspected between Lovell's barked knuckles and Snoop's swollen nose. And an argument between Bolsover major of the Remove and Figgins of St. Jim's was stopped only just in time before there was an outbreak of war.

Jack Drake walked down to the cricket ground with Harry Wharton and Co., and the face of the captain of the Remove was very grave.

"You see how things are going, Drake," he said. "It's getting too warm for comfort. If anything more happens, the cricket week looks like ending in a general scrap all round."

"It's a rotten shame," said Drake. "Looks as if somebody is bent on mucking up the affair more than anything else."

"It will end that way, anyhow," said Bob Cherry. "Of course, we're not going to have it made out that the thief is necessarily a Greyfriars chap. Why should we? There's no getting away from the fact that nothing was stolen before the visitors arrived."

"That's a solid fact," said Johnny Bull. And Hurree Singh declared that the factfulness was terrific.

"Of course, it's pretty hard to believe that a thief came over from either St. Jim's or Rookwood," said Harry. "Can't expect the

visitors to admit it, anyhow. But we're not having it put on Greyfriars."

"Not without proof, anyhow," remarked Nugent.

Jack Drake nodded. He understood how delicate the situation was, and how possible it was that serious trouble might crop up at any moment. He stood by the pavilion and looked on, when Jimmy Silver and Co. came down to play the Remove. Jimmy Silver greeted Wharton cheerily enough, but some of the Rookwooders looked rather restive. Arthur Edward Lovell was heard to whisper to his comrades—in a stage whisper—not to leave anything of value in the dressing-room.

Harry Wharton heard that whisper, and flushed crimson.

"Shut up, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver hastily.

"Well, I suppose we'd better be careful, hadn't we?" said Lovell, rather obstinately. "We don't want our pockets cleared out again."

"If you think——" began Bob Cherry hotly.

"Cheese it, Bob!" muttered Wharton.

"Well, he's not going to——"

"Dry up, you ass!"

Bob Cherry "dried up," but he looked wrathful and rather excited. Arthur Edward Lovell gave Bob a look that was not exactly one of defiance, but might easily have been mistaken for it.

"Order, you fellows!" muttered Jimmy Silver. "We're here to play cricket, not to——"

"Not to have our watches pinched," said Mornington. And there was a laugh among the Rookwooders.

"Shut up, Morny! Not to rag, I was going to say," answered Jimmy Silver. "This rotten affair is worrying the Greyfriars chaps more than us."

"Why don't they find out their blessed thief, then, and kick him out?" said Valentine Mornington.

Bob Cherry broke out savagely.

"How do you know it's a Greyfriars chap at all?" he bawled.

Mornington looked at him coolly.

"I take that for granted," he replied.

"You've no right to do anything of the sort."

"I assume the right, dear boy," answered Mornington, with provoking calm. "When I lose property in a place, I naturally figure it out that there's a thief about the place. I know I didn't bring one with me in my cricket-bag."

Again there was a laugh among the Rookwooders.

Bob Cherry strode towards Mornington with a very grim expression on his face. Wharton interposed at once, and just in time. Jimmy Silver pushed Mornington back.

"Can't you shut up, Morny?" he said savagely. "I tell you plainly that if there is a scrap here on your account, I'll turn you out of the team and put in one of the reserves."

Mornington shrugged his slim shoulders.

"Keep your wool on, old scout," he said coolly. "I'm not looking for a scrap with anybody. But I think——"

"Never mind what you think, so long as you don't talk," snapped Jimmy. "Shut up, and let's get on to the cricket. I'm waiting to toss, Wharton."

"Right-ho," said Harry.

Rookwood won the toss, and Jimmy Silver decided to bat first. He opened the innings with Mornington. Lovell had been on the list to begin, but Jimmy made the change at the last moment, being anxious to get Morny away from the pavilion crowd. Morny seemed to be in one of his quarrelsome moods, and there were plenty of Greyfriars fellows about who would not have been backward in picking up a challenge.

Harry Wharton and Co. went into the field, some of them looking red and angry. The keenness of the game, however, banished other considerations in a short time, and the mysterious thefts were forgotten, for a time at least, while the leather and the willow were busy. But when Mornington, in a bold attempt at four, was stumped and out, there was a loud laugh among the Greyfriars fellows, which was not quite good-natured, and which showed that they remembered Morny's unfortunate remarks earlier. Valentine Mornington looked round with a sneer as he walked

back to the pavilion, and Lovell came out to take his place.

The dandy of Rookwood was observed to lounge well away from the Greyfriars fellows, and when Ogilvy of the Remove passed near him, Morny was also observed to place his hand over his pocket in a sort of protecting way. Ogilvy observed the action, and he stopped and looked at Mornington with gleaming eyes.

"You rotter!" he said. "If you weren't a guest here, I'd mop the ground up with you!"

And Ogilvy walked away, strongly tempted to mop up the ground with Morny, guest or not. Mornington shrugged his shoulders and sneered. And Jack Drake, who was looking on, realised that it was high time that something was done to ease the tension.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

D'Arcy Helps!

JACK DRAKE remained watching the Remove-Rookwood match for some time, and then sauntered away to the Fourth Form ground. There, Cecil Reginald Temple and his merry men were playing St. Jim's. The latter were batting, Tom Merry and Talbot being at the wickets. Drake joined the little crowd of waiting batsmen, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bestowed a cordial nod and smile on him.

"Goin' stwong, deah boy?" he asked.

Figgins glanced round.

"Why, what's on?" he asked. "You're not in the cricket, Drake?"

Drake shook his head.

"I feah I cannot tell you what is on, Figgay," said Arthur Augustus mysteriously. "It is wathah a secwet."

Figgins looked astonished, as well he might. He was not aware that Jack Drake was there as a detective, but from the way Arthur Augustus was keeping the secret it was probable that he would not long remain in ignorance of the fact.

Drake moved hastily away, and the swell of St. Jim's followed him.

"Time for a little chat, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus affably. "I'm sixth on the list, and pewwaps I shan't be wanted at all.

We're knockin' the Fourth Form bowlin' sky-high. How are you gettin' on with the case, if I may inquiah?"

"Don't let it out all over the shop, you know," urged Drake.

"No feah!" said Arthur Augustus promptly. "I am keepin' your biznay heah vewy dark, old chap. You heard me tell Figgins that it was a secwet, didn't you?"

Drake suppressed his feelings.

"I have been thinkin' ovah this affair," continued Arthur Augustus, after a very cautious glance round to ascertain that there was no one within hearing. "I wemarked yestahday that I wathah thought I had a bit of a gift as a detective, Dwake."

"You did!" assented Drake.

"I have been twyin' to work it out, in the mannah of Fewwahs Locke or Sherlock Holmes, you know," confided Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I am not thinkin' of takin' the mattah out of your hands——"

"Thanks."

"Not at all! My ideah is simply to assist you, by givin' you the benefit of my wellec-
tions on the subject."

"You're too good," said Drake.

"It would be a vewy great pleasuah to me to be able to put you on the wight twack," said Arthur Augustus modestly. "Have you thought of the pwocess of elimination?"

"The which?"

"Pwocess of elimination, deah boy. You eliminate all the fellows that couldn't be the thief, you know, and then you are bound to find the wascal among those that wemain."

"And how do you figure it out?"

"F'winstance, when there is a theft, there is the wobbah and the wobbed," said Arthur Augustus.

"No doubt."

"You eliminate the wobbed, and that leaves you with fewah people to look among for the wobbah, see?"

"Good!"

"I am glad to see that you agree with me, Dwake. I wathah think that you are a weally good detective, youngstah as you are. Now, as a first pwoceedin', I should make a list of the fellows who have been wobbed."

"And eliminate them?" asked Drake.

"Yaas, wathah."

"You ought to be a detective yourself," said Drake with great admiration. "How do you think of these things?"

"Just wellec-
tin' on the mattah, that's all," answered Arthur Augustus unsuspectingly. "I have gone so fah as to make out a list of the wobbed chaps. Myself to begin with, and Jimmy Silvah, Lovell, Mornington, and Buntah, as well as Miss Marjowie. Of course, gals are above suspicion in any case."

"Of course," assented Drake gravely.

"That's five fellows to eliminate," said D'Arcy. "You see the point?"

"Quite."

"Of course, on personal gwounds I should eliminate evah so many more. But a detective cannot afford to be a wespectah of persons. You are bound to suspect evewy possible person until you find your man."

"You've got it."

"Yaas, wathah! But by eliminatin' the wobbed, you weduce the numbah of suspects, and that simplifies the whole bizney. If there are any more wobbewies, you will be able to eliminate some more, you know, which will weduce the numbah still furthah."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Drake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy beamed.

"I thought you would agree with me," he said. "I had some doubts at first, Dwake, if you don't mind my sayin' so, as you are such a youngstah, but I can see now that you are a first-wate detective."

Drake grinned.

"There's just one little weakness in your system," he observed.

"Bai Jove! I should be glad to know what that is. I have weally pondahed ovah it vewy deeply."

"Suppose the thief should rob himself——"

"Eh?"

"By pretending to lose something——"

"Oh!"

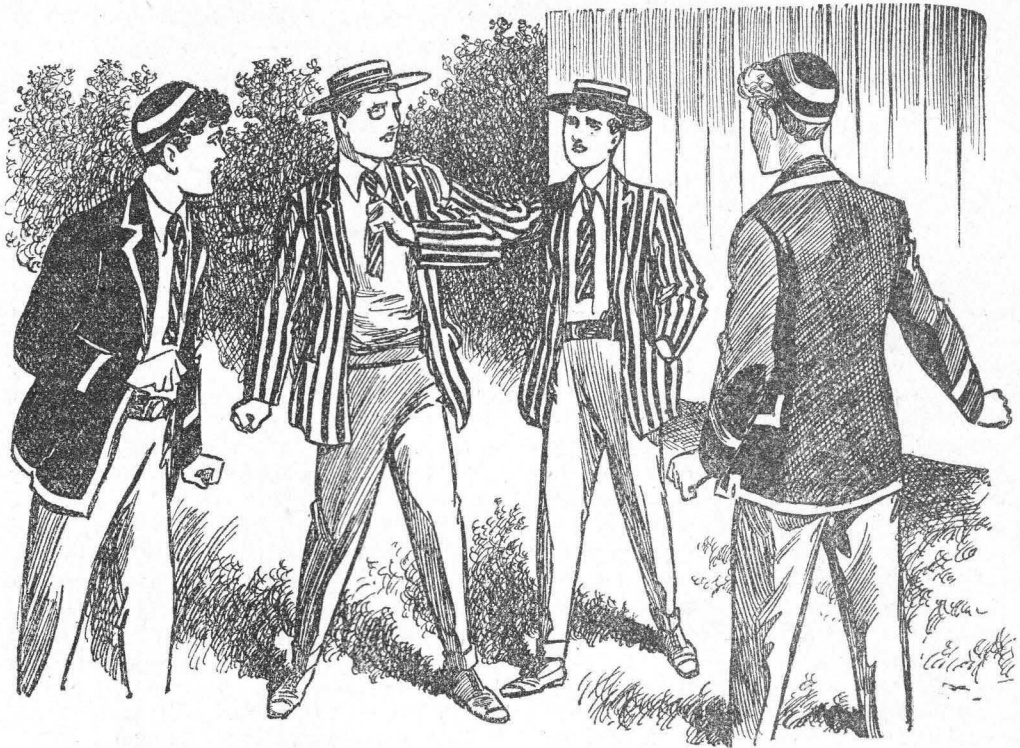
"That would put him on the list of the robbed——"

"Ah!"

"And eliminate him——"

"Hum!"

"And leave him safe and sound, and high and dry, while you're looking among



“When I lose property, I naturally figure it out that there’s a thief about the place,” said Mornington, with provoking calm. Bob Cherry strode towards Mornington with a very grim expression on his face. (See page 109)

an innocent crowd for your man!” grinned Drake.

“Bai Jove!” ejaculated Arthur Augustus. “I nevah thought of that!”

Jack Drake strolled away, leaving Arthur Augustus doing some further pondering. It occurred to Gussy’s powerful brain, at last, that there was more in a detective’s business than he had dreamt of in his philosophy. And the swell of St. Jim’s returned to the cricket, and gave the game his attention, sagely resolving to let Ferrers Locke’s assistant go ahead without his valuable aid.

“I say, Drake——”

Billy Bunter hailed the former Removite of Greyfriars in the quad. He came rolling up with a very friendly grin on his fat face.

“Hallo, fat old bean!” said Drake.

“About that ten bob——”

“What ten bob?”

“Didn’t you owe me ten bob when you left Greyfriars?”

“You know I didn’t, you fat fraud!”

Bunter coughed.

“Well, never mind the ten bob,” he said.

“I’ll tell you what, Drake. I’ve been disappointed about a postal-order this morning——”

“Not really?”

“Yes, really, you know,” said Bunter, blinking at him. “I was expecting a postal-order by the first post——”

“The same one you were expecting when I was in the Remove here?”

“Nunno—another one—quite a different one. But it hasn’t come.”

“I remember it never did,” assented Drake, with a nod.

“Some delay in the post,” said Bunter.

“What with strikes, and the way the

Government manages things, a fellow never can depend on getting his postal-orders to time. But it can't very well be delayed later than this afternoon. Would you mind lending me ten bob till it comes, Drake ? ”

“ Yes, rather. ”

“ I mean five bob, ” said Bunter, moderating his transports, as it were. “ Now I come to think of it, the postal-order will be for five bob, Drake. You wouldn't mind lending me that, I suppose ? ”

“ My dear chap, your supposer's out of gear, ” said Drake, kindly. “ I should mind very much. ”

“ If you're going to be mean, Drake—— ”

“ Just that ! ” assented Drake.

Billy Bunter blinked at him, more in sorrow than in anger.

“ We used to be such pals, when you were here ! ” he said.

“ What a memory you've got, ” said Drake admiringly. “ Now, I don't remember anything of the sort. ”

“ Beast ! ”

“ But I'll tell you what, ” said Drake, laughing. “ Come into the tuck-shop, and I'll stand you ginger-pop and a tart. ”

Bunter brightened up at once.

“ My dear chap, I'll come with pleasure, as you're so pressing, ” he exclaimed. “ This way. ”

And Bunter tucked a fat arm into Drake's and led him to the tuck-shop, and perched his fat form on a high stool, and proceeded to enjoy himself. And while he disposed of the ginger-pop and the tart—and another ginger-pop and another tart—Bunter bestowed the delights of his conversation on Jack Drake—and Drake listened with an attentive interest that Bunter seldom observed in a listener to his entertaining conversation.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

On the Track !

HARRY WHARTON looked hopefully at Drake when they met at lunch. Drake gave him a cheery smile ; but his smile told the captain of the Remove nothing.

There was much discussion at the table, but, unfortunately, the topic was chiefly cricket. Here and there, however, there were

remarks that would have been much better left unmade, and some grim looks.

Valentine Mornington, of Rookwood, was in a mischievous humour, and Arthur Edward Lovell seemed a little surly ; and Herries, of the St. Jim's Fourth, was rather outspoken when it would have been more judicious to keep silent. Skinner, and some other Remove fellows, persisted in keeping to the topic of the mysterious thefts, and dropped hints and gave mysterious shrugs, which were not lost on the visitors. There seemed to be a touch of electricity in the atmosphere at lunch, and most of the cricketers were glad when it was over.

After lunch, Herries of St. Jim's disappeared from view, and so did Russell of the Remove. When they were seen again, they were dabbing their noses—which needed it.

Evidently there had been a fight in some secluded corner. A little later, Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove, “ guessed ” in a rather loud tone that he could give thirty names among which would be found that of the thief—a plain hint which several of the visitors took at once ; with the result that Lovell and Raby and Newcome, and several St. Jim's fellows, collared Fisher T. Fish and lumped him, forcibly ; and Fishy quickly repented of his guessing. But a crowd of Removites came round the scene ; and Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, and Jimmy Silver, acting together, had all their work cut out to prevent a general row.

It was a great relief when the call came to cricket again. It stopped argument and recrimination, at least among the cricketers. Some of the visitors were heard to say that they would think twice before they came along to Greyfriars for another match ; and plenty of Greyfriars voices answered that they would think three times before they asked fellows who brought a pickpocket along with them.

The Greyfriars cricket week, so far as cricket was concerned, was going strong ; but in every other respect, it seemed likely to turn out a ghastly failure.

Harry Wharton wore a worried look as he walked down to Little Side. The morning's play had gone satisfactorily ; Rookwood, in their innings, were all down for the even

hundred, and the Remove had taken twenty runs for two wickets in their innings, so far. But much less pleasant thoughts than those of cricket worked in most minds now. Harry Wharton joined Drake, with a clouded brow.

"Things are going from bad to worse," he said, in a low voice. "We're all at sixes and sevens. If something isn't done by to-morrow, there will be a dozen scraps on, I'm sure of that. I'm beginning to be sorry that we ever thought of a Cricket Week at all, as it turns out."

"It's hard cheese," said Drake.

"Any luck so far?" asked the captain of the Remove, bluntly.

"I've been gathering up some points," said Drake, guardedly. "Can't all be done in one jump, you know. I've got my eyes open. I had a long jaw with Bunter this morning in the tuck-shop."

Wharton raised his eyebrows.

"Bunter?" he said. "Fat lot of good talking to Bunter, I should think." He coloured. "Excuse me, Drake—this rotten affair is getting on my nerves. I know you know your way about better than I can tell you."

"Well, I ought to," said Drake, unruffled. "Besides, I've got a lot of information from Bunter. It seems that he was keen on playing in the Cricket Week, and awfully sore at being left out of the eleven."

Wharton laughed impatiently.

"The fat fool! Has he been inflicting all that on you?"

"Yes," smiled Drake. "Lots of it."

"You weren't bound to let him bore you with his rot. You can kick him if you like."

Drake laughed.

"But I was interested," he said.

"Blessed if I see where the interest comes in," said the captain of the Remove, a little crossly. "We can stand Bunter at times, but just now, with this thing worrying us, I don't think I could." He gave a sudden start. "You don't suspect Bunter?"

"I suspect everybody till I've found my man."

"I thought of Bunter," said Harry. "But though a lot of valuables have been taken, he's as hard up as ever."

"I've noticed that."

"And then his own watch was taken——"

"I know."

"That's why most of the fellows think it must have been one of the visitors," said Harry. "Everybody at Greyfriars knows that Bunter's watch was no good. A thief wouldn't take an article he knew to be valueless, I suppose?"

"As a rule, no."

"As a rule?" repeated Wharton. "I should think that was always the case."

Drake did not reply to that.

"Some of the St. Jim's fellows think the police ought to be told and a description of D'Arcy's watch circulated, so that it can't be sold or pawned by the thief," said Harry, in a low voice. "Of course, they're right. But—but it would be a frightful disgrace for Greyfriars. Luckily, D'Arcy refuses to hear of anything of the kind—he's a splendid chap, and he knows he's risking never seeing the watch again."

"I think he will see it again," said Drake, quietly. "I think the plunder is still inside the walls of Greyfriars."

Wharton looked more hopeful.

"I'm glad of that," he said. "I hope to goodness you'll get on to something tangible to-day. By to-morrow it will be impossible to keep the peace in this crowd, I'm afraid—it may even end in the last match being thrown up, and the cricket going to pot."

"I've not been idle," said Drake. "I'll see you again at tea, Wharton. I suppose you'll have tea in your study, with some of the visitors."

"Yes."

"Have Bunter there—I'd like him to be present, and I'll come."

"Blessed if I know why you want him," said Harry, puzzled. "But he'll come anyway. He's holding it over our heads about going to the police with a tale of the robberies, and we have to let the fat villain have the run of the study to keep him quiet."

"Wharton!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Time, old top."

With a nod to Drake, the captain of the Remove hurried away to the cricketers. Drake remained with a thoughtful brow

watching the game for some time. When he sauntered off the ground, he was looking about him, as if in search of someone. He entered the School house, which was almost deserted by the juniors, and went up to the Remove passage. Skinner and Snoop and Stott were in their study, enjoying—or otherwise—surreptitious cigarettes; but for that dingy trio, the Remove quarters were deserted.

Drake went on up the staircase to the Remove dormitory. That big apartment was drawn blank.

He sauntered on imperturbably to the Fourth Form dormitory, which was shared with Temple, Dabney and Co. by the Rockwooders. It should have been quite untenanted at that hour in the afternoon. But as Drake approached it the door opened, and a fat figure rolled out.

“Oh!”

Billy Bunter uttered that ejaculation suddenly, in startled tones, as he sighted Drake.

The latter nodded affably.

“Just looking for you, Bunter,” he said.

“Wha-a-at for?”

“Like a ginger-pop?”

“Oh, certainly, old top,” said Bunter, his fat brow clearing at once. “I don’t mind if I do. Come along. I—I was—was looking round, you know——”

Drake had asked no questions, but the Owl of the Remove seemed to feel impelled, somehow, to explain his visit to the Fourth Form dormitory.

“Looking round!” repeated Drake.

“Yes, I—I thought the—the thief might be rooting about there,” said Bunter, blinking at Drake with a sidelong blink. “Might have been pinching something, you know, while all the fellows were down at the cricket.”

“That was rather thoughtful of you,” said Drake, with a very curious look at the Owl of the Remove.

“I’m a thoughtful chap,” said Bunter.

“Found anything out?”

“Oh, not at all! Nothing.”

Billy Bunter seemed rather preoccupied as he went to the school shop with the former Removite. He demolished his ginger-pop rather hastily, and rolled out of the tuck-shop.

Drake followed him.

“Coming to watch the cricket?” he asked.

“No fear!” Billy Bunter sniffed contemptuously. “Blow the cricket! Worth watching if I’d been in the team, perhaps.”

“They’re cheering Wharton——”

Another sniff from Bunter.

“Some rot!” he said. “You cut along and watch the cricket, Drake.”

“My dear chap, I’m sticking to you for a bit,” said Drake. “So nice to see you after such a long time, you know.”

This was very flattering; but Billy Bunter did not seem to be flattered, somehow. He seemed uneasy.

“Better get along and watch the Remove play Rookwood,” he said. “Wharton will expect to see you there.”

“Not at all. Let’s go for a stroll.”

Bunter’s uneasiness seemed to increase.

“The fact is, I don’t feel inclined for a stroll,” he said. “You go for a stroll, old fellow; I’m going to sit down under the trees.” And the Owl of the Remove plumped his fat form on one of the old oaken benches under the elms.

“Good idea,” said Drake, sitting down beside him. “Nothing like a rest in the shade of the trees on a warm afternoon.”

“Look here, Drake,” began Bunter.

“Well?”

“Oh, nothing.”

Bunter sat for some minutes under the trees; but he did not seem to be enjoying his repose in the pleasant shade. Far from looking restful and contented, he seemed to be almost in a twitter. He rose at last.

“I think I’ll go in,” he said.

“I’m coming in,” remarked Drake, casually.

“Better stay in the open air——”

“No; I’ll come in.”

Billy Bunter stopped, and turned on Drake, with his little round eyes gleaming through his glasses.

“Look here, you buzz off, Drake,” he exclaimed, tartly. “If you can’t take a hint, I may as well tell you that I don’t want your company. There!”

Jack Drake smiled.

“You don’t want my company?” he repeated. “Not even when we used to be such pals when I was in the Remove?”

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER

Coming to a Crisis!

"Oh, go and eat coke," snapped Bunter. He rolled away to the School house; and Drake walked in the same direction. On the steps of the house, Bunter turned his head and blinked back; and he frowned angrily as he saw Drake a dozen paces behind him. He fairly bolted into the house.

When Drake entered, the fat junior was out of sight. But as Ferrers Locke's assistant stood in the hall, Billy Bunter came down the big staircase again, looking breathless and flushed. Drake's eyes rested on him curiously, intently.

Bunter, without heeding him, rolled out into the quad., and went down to the cricket ground. Jack Drake, after some reflection, followed him, and arrived on the Remove ground a few minutes later. Bunter eyed him morosely when he arrived at the pavilion there, and rolled away at once to watch the Fourth and St. Jim's.

Drake did not follow him further. He remained where he was, watching the play between the Remove and Rookwood, keenly interested in the cricket, and apparently oblivious of the "case" upon which he had come to Greyfriars.

Indeed, to judge by his expression, one might have supposed that the boy detective had already brought his case to a successful conclusion.

There he remained until the end of the play, then, with a glance at the scoring board, turned and walked towards the Hall.



While Bunter, seated on a high stool, disposed of ginger-pop and tarts, he bestowed the delights of his conversation on Jack Drake. (See page 112)

HARRY WHARTON AND CO. gathered to a rather late tea in No. 1 Study, after the close of the day's play. The result of the play, so far, was very gratifying to the Co. Rookwood were 100 for an innings; and at the close the Remove had scored 115 for nine wickets, having one yet to fall when play was resumed on the morrow. So the Famous Five felt pretty cheerful when they

gathered in No. 1 Study, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver as their guests there. Billy Bunter, of course, rolled in, too—he had at present the "run" of the study, as Wharton had expressed it.

It was quite a cheery party in No. 1 as Jack Drake strolled in. But all the study parties were not so amicable; the worry of the mysterious thefts was on all minds, and some tempers were

growing bitter. Some of the visitors preferred feeding in the Hall to entering the Remove and Fourth studies as guests, and there was a good deal of stiffness and distant politeness to be seen on all sides.

There was no doubt that the series of mysterious occurrences during the Cricket Week had cast a shadow over the whole affair, and that matters were going from bad to worse.

No. 1 Study had started tea, when there was a knock at the door, and it opened to

reveal Valentine Mornington, of Rookwood. On Morny's face was a sarcastic smile.

"Trot in, old top," said Bob Cherry, resolutely forgetting the altercation of the morning. "Lots of room."

"Thanks, I haven't come to tea," yawned Mornington. "I've been up to the Fourth Form dormitory, where I've been so kindly accommodated, an' I thought I'd mention to you fellows that somethin's missin'."

Dismay fell on the faces of the cheery tea party.

"Something missing again!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Just so!"

"Bai Jove, this is weally gwowin' too wotten!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a look of great distress.

"He, he, he!" That unmusical cachinnation was William George Bunter's contribution to the discussion.

Bob Cherry gave the Owl of the Remove a furious look.

"If you cackle again, Bunter, I'll give you something to stop your blessed cackling," he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"What have you missed now?" demanded Bob gruffly, turning to Mornington with a far from amiable look.

Morny shrugged his elegant shoulders.

"Nothin' much. I'd locked my valuables, such as they are, in my bag. I wasn't takin' any more risks——"

"Cut that out, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver tartly.

"To hear is to obey," said Mornington sarcastically. "However, thinkin' that my clobber was safe, I left it lyin' around. Careless of me, I admit, in the circumstances."

"Has anybody been interfering with your clobber?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Merely a pair of sleeve-links—simply that and nothin' more," said Mornington lightly. "Plain gold, with a pearl in each—not very valuable, but your pet pickpocket seems to have thought them worth takin' out of my shirt. I thought I'd let you know."

Arthur Edward Lovell looked in over Morny's shoulder.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, that dashed

thief's been going through our things in the dorm, while we were at the cricket," he exclaimed. "I'm fed up with this kind of thing. If our shirts ain't safe here, the sooner we get out of Greyfriars the better."

"That mayn't make your shirts any safer," snorted Johnny Bull. "Perhaps you'll take the thief home with you to Rookwood."

"No thieves at Rookwood, I can tell you," retorted Lovell.

"Well, there's none here, you cheeky ass."

"Cheeky ass yourself!" said Lovell. "Go and eat coke! Bad enough to have our things pinched, I think, without——"

"Pway calm yourself, deah boy," interposed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pacifically.

"Who's not calm?" roared Lovell.

"Bai Jove! You are not, at the pwsent moment, deah boy."

"Oh, you're an ass——"

"Weally, Lovell ——"

"I'm fed up, I tell you!" shouted Lovell. "You can make signs at me if you like, Jimmy Silver; but I tell you I'm fed up. My tie-pin's gone—of course, I ought to have locked it up, considering where we are——"

"You cheeky rotter!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"But I came here to play cricket, not to lock up my tie-pin," roared Lovell, quite as angry as Johnny Bull. "I left it on the wash-stand, and now it's gone, and so has Morny's sleeve-links. And I can jolly well tell you that I'm jolly well inclined to take the first train back to Rookwood in the morning, and let the cricket go hang."

"The sooner the better!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, Johnny, for goodness' sake," breathed Wharton.

"Rats! That cheeky rotter——"

"So I'm a rotter for not wanting my pockets picked, am I?" bawled Lovell. "Step out here in the passage and call me a rotter again."

"I'll jolly soon do that!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, springing up.

"You won't!" Wharton pushed his excited chum back into his chair. "Keep quiet, bother you!"

"Look here——"

"Quiet, I tell you!"

"Yaas, wathah," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway keep your tempahs, deah boys. No good waggin'."

Arthur Edward Lovell, with a scornful snort, stalked away along the Remove passage. Mornington only lingered to bestow a sardonic grin on the study party, and followed him.

Jimmy Silver sat looking red and uncomfortable. Every face in the study was dark and dismayed, excepting Bunter's. The Owl of the Remove was grinning. Jack Drake's eyes were on Bunter's fat face, curiously, keenly.

"I say, this is awfully rotten," said Jimmy Silver, breaking a painful silence. "I'm awfully sorry at the fellows cutting up rusty like that, Wharton. But—but—"

"It's natural enough," said Harry, with an effort. "It's enough to make any fellow wild, I suppose."

"Yaas, wathah."

"We hoped that Drake might be able to nail the rotter," said Bob Cherry hopelessly. "That turns out to be no good. No offence, Drake, you know," he added quickly. "I know you've done all you could."

Drake smiled.

"Perhaps I've done better than you've thought," he said tranquilly. "I've not been wasting my time while you've been at the cricket."

There was a quick moment of eager interest in No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton looked at the boy detective almost breathlessly.

"You've discovered something?" he exclaimed.

The juniors hung on Drake's reply; especially Bunter. The Owl of the Remove quite forgot to punish the cake. He stared at Drake, with his little round eyes open behind his spectacles—his mouth full, but his active jaws suddenly ceasing their activity.

Drake's answer was short and crisp:

"Yes!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in great relief. "Do you mean to say that you can put your finger on the thief?"

"I think so."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"And the stolen property?"

"The stolen property is still inside the School house," said Jack Drake calmly. He did not look at Bunter, and did not seem aware of the wide-open saucer-like eyes that were fixed upon him. "I know where to look for it. And once it is in our hands——"

"Yes?" breathed Bob.

"You've heard of finger-print clues?" drawled Drake.

"My hat!"

"Ow!" That was a sudden ejaculation from Billy Bunter. But no one heeded him, in the excitement of the moment.

The Owl of the Remove rose to his feet.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter—don't jaw now——"

"Oh, really, Wharton—if you speak to me like that——"

"Shut, up I tell you."

"I shall decline to remain in this study, Wharton, if you can't speak to a fellow civilly."

"Then get out, and be hanged to you," said the captain of the Remove testily. "Now, Drake——"

Billy Bunter rolled to the door, and slammed it after him as he went. His departure did not trouble the juniors in any way; all their attention was fixed on the boy assistant of Ferrers Locke. Their faith in him had wavered a little; but Drake's words had restored it.

"Now, where's the stuff?" exclaimed Nugent eagerly.

"And the thief?" demanded Bob.

Drake smiled.

"The stuff is upstairs, somewhere—I suspect in the Remove dormitory," he answered quietly, "and the thief——"

"Where is he?"

"Gone to hide the stuff in a fresh place——"

"What?"

"To get it out of sight before I can get hold of it and examine it for finger-prints!" said Drake.

"Wha-at?"

"Bai Jove!"

Then there was a yell in No. 1 Study as the juniors comprehended:

"BUNTER!"

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

Stop Thief!

JACK DRAKE rose quietly to his feet.

There was a buzz of excitement in No. 1 Study.

"Bunter!" repeated Bob Cherry. "But

"Wasn't Buntah's own watch stolen?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I—I say, Drake——"

"Wathah remarkable for a chap to bag his own watch," said Arthur Augustus. "That's a vewy odd pwoceedin' for a beastly thief, you know."

"There was no thief," said Drake.

"What?"

"I mean, it's not a case of theft. The fellow who bagged the things had no intention of keeping them. He has simply hidden them away."

"What on earth for?" asked Tom Merry, in amazement.

"To muck up the Greyfriars Cricket Week."

"What?" roared Wharton.

"Why?" yelled Jimmy Silver.

Drake smiled slightly.

"Because he had a fool idea that he ought to play for Greyfriars in the Cricket Week, I fancy, and felt injured at being left out. It was his idea of punishment."

"Great Scott!"

"Bai Jove, of all the uttah duffahs——"

"I remember now," gasped Bob Cherry, "the howling ass said he would make us sit up for leaving him out of the cricket——"

"He told us to beware!" ejaculated Nugent. "I remember! I thought he had got the pictures on the brain."

"So did I," growled Wharton. "I never thought—where are you going, Drake?"

"Unless I'm mistaken, Bunter has gone to shift the loot to another hiding-place," said Drake. "I'm going to keep an eye on him. My idea is that we shall find him walking off with the whole bundle in his pockets. One or two of you come with me—not a crowd, or he may take the alarm."

"Right-ho."

Harry Wharton and Tom Merry followed Drake from the study. The rest of the party

remained in a buzz of tense excitement. They did not see yet how the boy detective had ascertained the facts—but they did not doubt that he was right. And there was deep relief in every face now, at the prospect of clearing up the mystery, and lifting the dark cloud that hung over the Cricket Week. And it was a relief, too, to know that the whole affair was not, after all, a real case of theft, but only an obtuse scheme of vengeance inspired by the "films."

Mornington and Lovell were talking in the passage, and Drake called to them.

"Did Bunter pass you?"

"Yes," answered Lovell, shortly.

"Which way did he go?"

"Up the staircase."

"Good."

Drake and Wharton and Tom Merry hurried up the staircase leading to the dormitories. As they reached the dormitory passage, they trod softly. It was necessary to avoid giving the alarm to the Owl of the Remove. Drake's idea was to catch him fairly in the act, with the looted property on his person, which would prove the case beyond the shadow of a doubt, and leave no room for the exercise of Bunter's remarkable gift of lying.

The door of the Remove dormitory was ajar, as it had been left by someone entering hurriedly. Undoubtedly it was Bunter.

Drake held up his hand for silence, and the three juniors stopped outside the door, and peered in through the opening.

"Bunter!" breathed Wharton.

The Owl of the Remove was in full view.

There was a wall-cupboard at the end of the dormitory, and the doors of it were wide open, and Bunter was visible, on his hands and knees, kneeling inside the big cupboard.

Evidently he was raising a loose board in a corner of the floor.

The three juniors had a view of Bunter's conspicuous trousers as he knelt there, with his back to them.

In the silence of the dormitory, they heard him lay aside the loose section of board he had prised up.

Then he bent further forward, groping in the opening below.

Once he looked round nervously over his

shoulder, blinking with evident alarm. But the short-sighted Owl of the Remove could not possibly see the three watching faces at the door. He turned to his task again.

In silence the juniors watched him.

One by one hidden articles were taken out of the recess under the cupboard floor, and transferred to Bunter's pockets.

His task completed at last, the fat junior replaced the section of board, and they heard him jamming it securely into its place, and replacing two or three pairs of boots over it.

Then he rose to his feet, gasping for breath.

There were beads of perspiration on his fat brow. Billy Bunter was not accustomed to hurrying himself; but he had hurried breathlessly on this occasion.

He stood for some moments, with his fat brow wrinkled in thought.

As clearly as if they could read the workings of his fat brain, the watching juniors knew that he was debating in his mind the question of a new place of concealment for the abstracted articles.

Apparently he decided that the Remove dormitory was not safe enough; for he started towards the door.

Drake signed to his companions to step back.

They retreated across the passage, and

waited for the Owl of the Remove to emerge from the dormitory.

The door opened, and Bunter rolled out.

At the sight of the three juniors, he stopped suddenly. His little round eyes seemed to bulge through his spectacles, as he stared at them.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Well, Bunter?" said Harry Wharton, grimly.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"What have you been doing up here?" asked Tom Merry.

"N-nothing."

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"I think the case is pretty complete now," said Jack Drake, quietly.

"Yes, rather."

Bunter's eyes dilated behind his big glasses.

"I—I say, you fellows, if—if you think——"

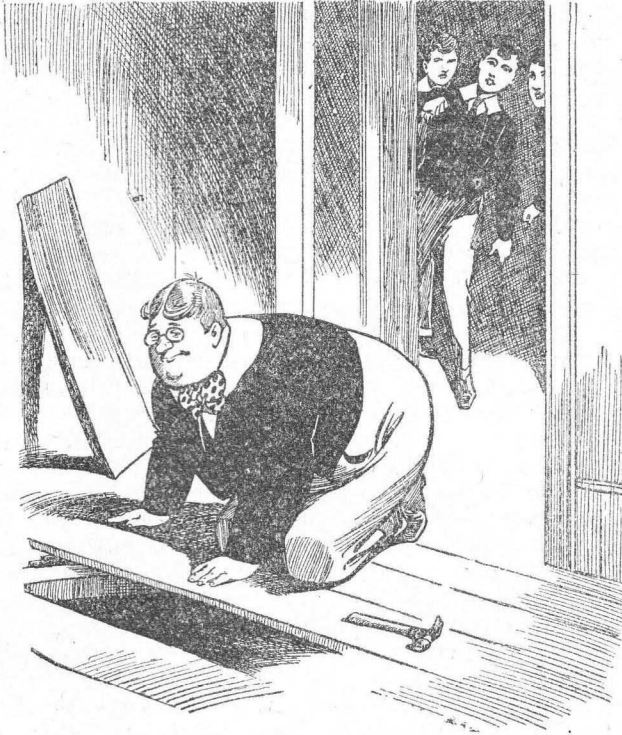
"We don't think—we know!" interrupted the captain of the Remove, curtly. "And now——"

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Billy Bunter gave a wild blink round him, and started to run. In a second the three juniors were sprinting on his track down the passage to the stairs.

"Collar him!" exclaimed Drake.

In ordinary circumstances, Bunter would have been collared before he had covered three yards. But terror lent wings, as it were, to the Owl of the Remove. He ran as he had



Bunter was visible, on his hands and knees, kneeling inside the big cupboard. He was raising a loose board in the corner of the floor. (See opposite page)

THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER

Brought to Light!

never run before, reached the staircase, and bounded down it two or three steps at a time.

After him came Drake and Wharton and Tom Merry, at top speed.

"Stop him!" roared Wharton, as Bunter reached the landing below, and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of St. Jim's appeared in sight there. The three St. Jim's juniors stared round in astonishment.

"Stop him!" shouted Drake.

"Yaroooh! Lemme alone!" gasped Bunter.

He rushed right on, and Figgins and Co. stood up to the charge. Figgins was bowled right over, and sprawled on the landing, and Kerr went reeling under Bunter's weight. But Fatty Wynn stood up to it—his own weight was very nearly equal to Bunter's—and he grasped the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter struggled desperately.

"What the thump——" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Hold him! He's the thief!" shouted Wharton.

"Oh, my hat! I've got him."

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter.

"No fear! Oh, crumbs!" gasped Wynn, as Bunter, quite desperate now, jammed a fat fist under his chin.

Fatty Wynn's grasp relaxed, and Bunter tore himself loose. Just before Drake reached him, he bolted on, and dodged into the Remove passage. There was a roar as he collided with Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Stop him!"

"Stop thief!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came sprinting out of No. 1 Study, with the rest of the Co. at his heels. "Collar him!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"Why—what—what's this?" stuttered Lovell. Something that glittered on the floor of the Remove passage caught Arthur Edward's eye. He picked it up; it was his own tie-pin.

Bunter made a desperate break for the lower staircase. But there was no chance for him. There were thirty fellows at least in the passage now, and a dozen of them were reaching out for Bunter. Bob Cherry's grasp closed on his collar; Johnny Bull secured his right ear, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh his left. Bunter was a prisoner at last!

"WHAT the thump——"
"What the merry dickens——"
"I say——"

There was a roar of excited voices in the Remove passage. Nearly all the Remove and the St. Jim's fellows had gathered there, with a crowd of the Rookwooders. The passage was almost crammed.

The rumour had spread with amazing swiftness that the mysterious thief was caught. Arthur Edward Lovell was holding his tie-pin up on high, in great excitement.

"He dropped it!" roared Lovell. "Bunter dropped it when he biffed into me. He had it—Bunter had it!"

"He's the thief!"

"A Greyfriars fellow, after all!" said Mornington, with a curl of the lip.

"Lynch him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, it's all a mistake. I—I can explain. Only give me time——"

"If you came before a magistrate for this he would give you time!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"I say, you fellows, it's all a mistake——"

"Have you got the loot about you?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Certainly not."

"Rag him!"

"Make him shell out!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, his voice dominating the excited crowd.

"This matter is in Drake's hands——"

"Bother Drake!" said Lovell. "Who's Drake, anyhow?"

"Drake came here to find the thief," said Harry. "He is a detective—the assistant of Ferrers Locke, and he came here to help us out. And he's done it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, you beast!" groaned Bunter.

"I've got something to say if you fellows will give me a chance to speak," said Jack Drake.

"Go ahead, old bean."

"Yaas, wathah!"

DETENTION!



To face page 121

TUBBY MUFFIN OF ROOKWOOD HAS SOME PANE-FUL REFLECTIONS!

"It is not a case of theft, in my opinion
——" went on Drake.

"Rot!"

"Rubbish!"

"I do not think any of the stolen property will be found to be missing," continued Drake. "Bunter isn't a thief—he's only a fat fool, with the 'pictures' on the brain——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Drake——"

"Bring him along to the Rag," said Drake. "There's room for all the fellows there, and the matter can be explained. And we can decide how to deal with Bunter. This isn't a matter for the Head."

"I—I won't come!" roared Bunter.

"Won't you, my fat old bean," grinned Bob Cherry. "I rather think you will. Roll him along."

"Yow-ow! Help!"

"Help him with your boot, Lovell."

"You bet!"

"Yoooooop!"

Billy Bunter decided that he would go. He stumbled down the staircase in the midst of an excited crowd, held on all sides. More and more juniors were arriving on the scene, and it was quite an army that marched into the Rag with Billy Bunter in their midst.

The Rag was an extensive apartment, used by the juniors for their meetings; but it was well crowded now. All the Rookwooders and the St. Jim's fellows were there, and nearly all the Remove, and a crowd of the Fourth.

Jack Drake closed the door when the crowd were all inside.

Billy Bunter stood gasping for breath, with the perspiration in beads on his fat brow. He realised that he was "in for it" now. All his remarkable gifts as an Ananias were not likely to save him.

His extraordinary scheme for "mucking up" the Greyfriars Cricket Week had been a success—up to a point. Certainly the Cricket Week had bade fair to be thoroughly "mucked" up. But for the intervention of Ferrers Locke's assistant, Bunter's scheme would probably have been a success all along the line. But the young rascal had been brought up sharply now. He blinked round in alarm and apprehension at the crowd of threatening

faces. He strove to collect his wits, and to think of a "whacking" lie that would see him through. But the case seemed hopeless.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter feebly, as the juniors gathered round him. "I say, I—I can explain it all——"

"You'll be given a chance," said Harry Wharton grimly. "You're going to have fair play, you fat rascal."

Lovell held up the tie-pin.

"He dropped it when he biffed into me—that settles the matter!" bawled Lovell.

"I—I didn't——" gasped Bunter.

"I picked it up where you dropped it——"

"You—you didn't! I—I think it was Mornington dropped it——"

"What?" yelled Mornington.

"Or—or somebody! What are you down on me for?" demanded Bunter. "I haven't done anything—not a thing! If Drake accuses me, let him trot out his evidence. I'll knock it right on the head."

"Well, my hat!"

"Give a fellow fair play," urged Bunter.

"You fat boulder——"

"He wants to gain time to make up a thumping lie," remarked Skinner; and there was a laugh.

"Go ahead, Drake," said Bob Cherry. "It's not quite clear to me how you fixed it on Bunter. Let's hear."

"Yaas, wathah! We're awf'ly intewested, deah boy."

"Go it, Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

Something like silence was restored. All the juniors were very keen to hear how the boy detective had elucidated the mystery.

"It was not what I should call a difficult case," said Drake, with a smile.

"It beat us!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"We're not budding Ferrers Lockes!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Get on with it, Drake."

Jack Drake proceeded to explain quietly, and the juniors listened with rapt attention.

"First of all, I got full details of the affair from Wharton and the others," he said. "Then I had a big think. There was a bit of a clue to begin with——"

"How's that?"

"The first article stolen was D'Arcy's watch and chain. It was taken during the night in the Remove dormitory. That looked rather as if the thief was in that dormitory. A fellow coming along from another dormitory to grope round for plunder would run a good many risks, and he could hardly know where D'Arcy had put his watch and chain on going to bed. On the other hand, most of the fellows in the Remove dorm, would have noticed Gussy's tremendous ticker."

"Bai Jove!"

"It was taken from under his pillow while he was asleep. Anybody outside the dorm, would not have known it was there—could not even have been sure which bed D'Arcy occupied—so I figured it out that the thief was in the same dormitory."

"Yaas, that appeahs vewy pwob. as you put it!"

"That confined the search to the Remove and the St. Jim's fellows, and cut out the Rookwooders and all the rest of Greyfriars," continued Drake. "From the time when I was at the school I had a pretty thorough knowledge of the Remove, and I knew most of the St. Jim's chaps, and I couldn't think of anyone who was likely to be a thief. I thought of Skinner with the idea that the whole thing might be a hoax."

"Thanks!" yawned Skinner.

"But Skinner was out of gates on Wednesday afternoon when Miss Marjorie's Dorothy bag was taken, as I learned from a little inquiry. But from the first I did not believe that it was a case of real theft. I believed that the things were taken from another motive, and I looked for the motive. Bunter was kind enough to enlighten me."

"Oh, really, Drake——"

"I found that Bunter had been very keen on getting into the Remove eleven for the Cricket Week, and that he was very sore at being left out," continued Drake. "I found that he had been throwing off dark hints about making the Cricket Week a failure, if he wasn't given justice, as he called it. He didn't get what he considered justice——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I kept an eye on Bunter. Then there

was the matter of his own watch being stolen. I remembered his watch, and I couldn't figure it out that a thief would be ass enough to waste his time bagging a thing that had no value——"

"My watch was worth thirty guineas!" bawled Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Certainly no Greyfriars fellow, however dishonest, would have thought of taking it," said Drake. "So if it was a real thief, that reduced the possible suspects to the St. Jim's fellows."

"Bai Jove!"

"But it was a St. Jim's fellow who had been robbed first. If any of D'Arcy's companions had had designs on his watch, there was no reason why they should wait till he came over to Greyfriars to bag it in the Remove dormitory. So I figured it out that it was pretty clear that there was no thief at all, only a thumping young rascal playing a rotten trick to make the fellows believe there was a thief, and to muck up this merry gathering. I think he came near to success. I believe there were signs that relations here were growing strained."

There was a laugh in the Rag.

"Yaas, wathah!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Lovell blushed.

"I—I'm sorry I—I rather kicked up a row!" he mumbled. "I—I was just falling into the rotter's trap in doing it, I suppose?"

"Exactly!" said Drake.

"Let me get at him!"

"Hold on!" interrupted Jimmy Silver. "Drake isn't finished yet. Get on with the washing, Drake!"

"Right! I wanted to find a fellow with a strong motive for causing general trouble and mucking up the Cricket Week, and I found him in Bunter. I figured it out that he had bagged his own watch and hidden it with the rest of the plunder to keep suspicion off himself. I kept an eye on Bunter, and bestowed my company on him, which he did not seem to enjoy very much on one occasion, at least. This afternoon I caught him sneaking out of the Fourth Form dormitory while you fellows were at the cricket——"



"Shell out, you fat rotter!" roared a dozen voices. Billy Bunter wriggled spasmodically while his pockets were turned out by half-a-dozen hands. Quite a curious collection came to light! (See page 124)

"I explained that!" hooted Bunter.

"He spun me a yarn of keeping a watch for the thief," said Drake. "I let him think he had taken me in. I stuck to him, knowing pretty well that he had raided the Rookwood fellows' things and had some more plunder about him."

"Beast!"

"He tried to get rid of me, and I hung on long enough to make it quite clear that he wanted to be alone to hide his plunder," continued Drake, while Billy Bunter eyed him like a basilisk. "I followed him to the House again, and there let him go. It was

clear after that that he was easy in his mind, so it was clear that he had hidden the plunder inside the House somewhere. As he was too cautious to go near the place while he was being watched, it might have been a long and difficult job to find the loot, and then to connect Bunter with the thefts. So I laid a little trap for him."

"Yah!"

"I asked Wharton to have him to tea in No. 1 Study. I wanted him to hear me mention to Wharton that I knew where the plunder was, and that I could find the thief's finger-prints on it and identify him by that

means. I knew, of course, that as soon as Bunter heard that, he would bunk out of the study to get at the loot and hide it in another and safer place. He did so, and we followed him to the Remove dormitory."

"And then?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"We collared him as he came out, and here he is!" said Jack Drake. "He dropped Lovell's tie-pin, but the rest of the loot will be found in his pockets. That's all."

Every eye turned on Bunter.

"Shell out!" said Bob Cherry.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

Rough Justice!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the crowd of juniors. He had listened to Jack Drake's exposition of the case with growing dismay. His cunning scheme had been good enough to baffle the Greyfriars fellows, but the boy detective had torn it to shreds and tatters with scarcely an effort. The Owl of the Remove realised that he was caught, but he did not give up hope yet. He still hoped to save himself by the methods of Ananias.

"Got anything to say, Bunter?" demanded Johnny Bull.

Bunter gasped.

"Yes, certainly! I'm innocent!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Have you got the loot about you?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Certainly not! I never hid it under a loose board in the Remove dormitory!"

"What?"

"And—and I didn't go there to take it away——"

"Great Scott!"

"The—the fact is——" stammered Bunter.

"Yes, let's have the facts," grinned Skinner. "Bunter's nuts on facts! Get on with the facts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, I—I'm shocked at you fellows," said Bunter. "I'm really disgusted. Knowing me to be a perfectly honourable fellow——"

"Phew!"

"Knowing me to be the soul of honour, I think it's simply rotten of you to accuse me

like this! All I can do is to retire from—the scene, and—and leave you to—to repent of your unworthy suspicions!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I prefer to let the whole matter drop!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"I weally think that chap must be a little bit pottay!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with conviction.

"Shell out, you fat rotter!" roared a dozen voices.

"Search him," said Johnny Bull, impatiently.

"I—I say you fellows, I object to being searched," yelled Bunter. "It's—it an insult——"

"I'm afraid you'll have to swallow the insult, old top," grinned Bob Cherry. "Turn out his pockets, you fellows, while I hold his neck."

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter wriggled spasmodically in Bob's iron grasp while his pockets were turned out by half-a-dozen hands.

Quite a curious collection came to light.

First of all came Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's gold watch and chain and purse, which was handed over to the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove! I'm weally vewy glad to see that again!" remarked D'Arcy.

"Count the banknotes in the purse," said Wharton.

"Not necessary, deah boy. I am sure they are all there."

"Count them, ass," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowtah——"

"Count them, fathead."

"Oh, vewy well!" said Arthur Augustus, resignedly.

And he counted the banknotes, and announced that they were intact.

The rest of the plunder was turned out of Bunter's pockets by that time. Marjorie's Dorothy-bag was taken possession of by Hazeldene; and the Rookwood fellows found their currency notes to the right amount, and Mornington received his pearl sleeve-links undamaged. Even Bunter's own famous watch was among the collection; but that was left to Bunter.

William George Bunter's face was a study,

as the purloined property was extracted, and handed round to the owners.

In the face of evidence like this, even the celebrated Ananias might have felt his wits fail him.

But even yet Bunter did not give up hope. He was so accustomed to getting out of scrapes by telling "whoppers" that he did not realise that whoppers could not serve him now.

"Well, that's that!" said Bob Cherry. "And now we've got to deal with Bunter."

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Weally, Buntah, I do not see that you can have anything to say, as the stolen property has been found in your pockets."

"Let me explain!" yelled Bunter, as there was a movement towards him among the juniors.

"Rats! Collar him!"

"Oh, let him explain," said Bob, waving back the too eager Removites. "Let's see what frightful whoppers he will spin out! Go it, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I can explain everything," gasped Bunter. "I—I think you fellows might be—might be a little grateful to me, for finding the stolen property in this way."

"What?"

"That's how it is," said Bunter. "I—I set my wits to work, you know, and—and elucidated the mystery. That's how it was! I—I discovered that the stolen stuff was—was hidden in the Remove dormitory, and—and went to search for it, and—and found it! I—I was just bringing it along to you, Wharton——"

"Well, if that don't take the cake!" gasped Bob Cherry.

The juniors gazed at Bunter in silence—the silence of astonishment. That he should spin so unconvincing a yarn was amazing; but it was still more amazing that he should hope to find any believers. But the silence encouraged Bunter, and he rattled on with more confidence.

"That's exactly how it happened! I—I knew Drake wasn't any good as a detective, and—and I did his job for him! I think

you fellows might be grateful! I really think that."

"Then why did you bolt when we met you outside the dormitory?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I—I didn't——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, it was only a lark," gasped Bunter. "I—I thought I'd pull your leg, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"And why did you suggest that Morny had dropped the pin you dropped, if you were only restoring the stolen property?" hooted Lovell.

"I didn't—I—I mean, that was another joke——"

"Too many little jokes about you, Bunter," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "You're too funny by half, old top."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Any more whoppers to tell, Bunter, before we scrag you?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Collar him!"

"Hold on, you fellows," yelled Bunter. "I—I haven't explained yet. The fact—the—the actual fact is, that the whole thing was a joke! I—I just hid the things, you know, to take a rise out of you! C-c-can't you fellows take a joke?"

"We're getting nearer to the facts," grinned Jimmy Silver.

"You fat rotter!" said Harry Wharton, sternly. "You played this rotten trick on us to muck up the Cricket Week, and you jolly nearly succeeded."

"It was all your fault, Wharton."

"My fault?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

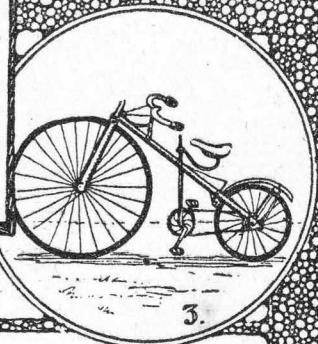
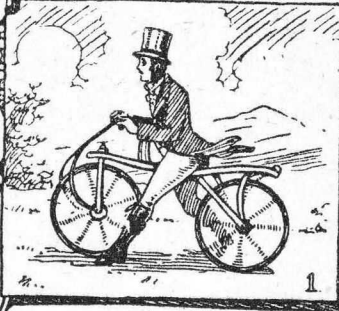
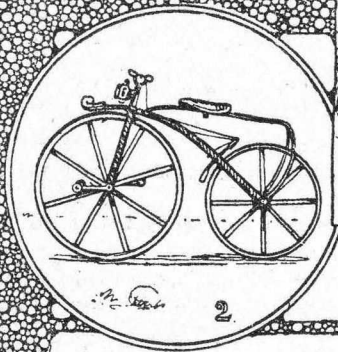
"Yes, yours," said Bunter, hotly. "If you'd played me in the Remove eleven, according to my rights, it wouldn't have happened. I warned you that if I didn't have my rights I'd muck up your dashed Cricket Week. You can't deny that."

"Why, you—you——"

"Collar him!"

The wrathful juniors were not to be

The Development of the Bicycle.



The bicycle has been in use in England for just over a century. The original machines were, of course, very crude in design, and by no means comfortable to ride. Fig. 1 illustrates one of the earliest bicycles and shows clearly how it was propelled. This particular bicycle was called the "Dandy Horse," and was not much more than a beam carried on two wheels. The rider sat in a sort of a saddle, astride the beam, and pushed the "Dandy Horse" forward by kicking the ground backwards with each foot alternately.

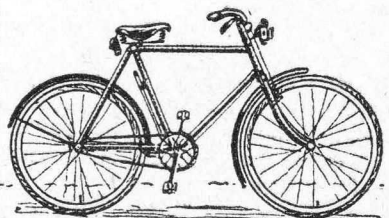
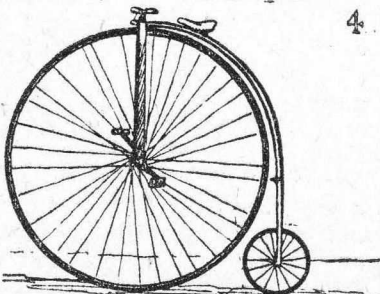
About the year 1869 a great improvement was manifest in bicycle construction. See Fig. 2. Pedals were used for the first time, but on the front wheel. This machine became universally known as the "boneshaker." One does not need to seek far for the reason.

Fig. 3 is of a bicycle of the year 1879, and shows more improvements still. The pedals, it will be noticed, are no longer on the front wheel, but in the position we have them to-day. This bicycle is the first in which a chain is used to pull the back wheel round, and is, in fact, the original model of present-day machines.

Fig. 4 shows the famous "Penny-farthing" machine, a few of which are actually still in use to-day, although they are very rare.

The bicycle began to be popular soon after 1880, when what is known as the safety bicycle was invented. Then bicycle building went ahead by leaps and bounds. Pneumatic tyres, the free wheel, new methods of gearing, etc., made cycling such a pleasure that millions of men, women, and children took it up. An up-to-date bicycle is shown in our last sketch.

Some remarkable performances have been put up on bicycles. An American cyclist is credited with having ridden 8,000 miles in a year, and in 1884 a Mr. Thomas Stevens started from San Francisco on a world tour, by bicycle, which took him three years to accomplish. Since then the globe has been traversed several times on bicycles.



THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

A Glorious Finish!

restrained any longer. They closed round Bunter like a tidal wave.

That the affair was not a matter of theft at all was clear enough now, and that was a great relief to all the fellows. But Bunter's trick was exasperating to all concerned. He had almost ruined the Cricket Week—he had caused doubts and suspicions on all sides, and trouble even to the extent of fisticuffs. But for Drake's timely discovery, the Greyfriars Cricket Week would probably have finished disastrously—if it had finished at all. It was a case that called for exemplary punishment.

And exemplary punishment was what Bunter received.

Greyfriars and Rookwood and St. Jim's all joined in the proceedings, and all of them seemed very anxious to get at close quarters with Bunter.

Bunter was not at all anxious to be got at; but Bunter's wishes didn't count. He was got at—severely!

He was bumped, and he was rolled; and he ran the gauntlet of the whole crowded Rag, and the crowd almost fell over one another in their keenness to get in a whack at Bunter.

Arthur Augustus, in his excitement, gave Blake a terrific smack, and Figgins another, which were intended for Bunter, but arrived at the wrong address. But Billy Bunter received a sufficiency of whacks and smacks and thwacks. By the time he had run the gauntlet, he was feeling as if he had been through a series of earthquakes and air-raids and boiler explosions.

When the juniors crowded out of the Rag at last, satisfied that justice was done, William George Bunter was left sitting on the floor, with a strong impression that justice had been considerably over-done.

He was breathless, and gasping for his second wind. His collar was gone; most of his buttons were off; he was dusty and he was dishevelled. And for a quarter of an hour at least, Bunter's remarks were confined to:

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Wow! Yow! Oooooop! Ow!"

It was likely to be a long time before the hapless Owl of the Remove started in business again as a plotter!

THE last day of the Greyfriars Cricket Week dawned bright and sunny.

It was a glorious day for the grand old game; and all the cricketers looked as sunny as the blue summer sky.

The clouds had rolled by; the mystery that had troubled them was a mystery no longer; and everything in the garden, as Bob Cherry said, was lovely.

Fellows, who had been a little "edge-wise" under the irritating influence of the mysterious thefts, were only anxious now to forget that there had been any trouble; Lovell and Johnny Bull were quite chummy that morning, and even Valentine Mornington smiled a smile that had no trace of sarcasm about it. If there was one clouded face, it was William George Bunter's. But nobody had any attention to waste upon William George Bunter.

Harry Wharton and Co. went down cheerfully to the cricket, with the Rookwood crowd. A little less cheerfully, perhaps, Temple Dabney and Co., of the Fourth, faced St. Jim's. Cecil Reginald Temple had hoped to atone for his defeat at the hands of Rookwood by wiping St. Jim's off the face of the earth, as it were. But the wiping-off proved to be what Hurree Jamset Ram Singh called a boot on the other leg. Tom Merry and Co. walked all over the hapless Fourth, and at noon the match was finished, with a St. Jim's victory by ninety runs.

It was a much more protracted conflict that took place on the Remove ground. The Remove finished their first innings with a total of 126, which was twenty-six more than Rookwood had scored. But Jimmy Silver and Co. were far from losing heart.

They started their second innings in great form, and by lunch they were 101 for eight wickets. The innings finished after lunch, with a total of 130.

By that time, the Fourth Form match being over, Tom Merry and Co. came along to watch Rookwood playing the Remove; and half Greyfriars was crowded about the ground to see the finish of the match.

Harry Wharton opened the innings for the

Remove, with Bob Cherry at the other end. And the two mighty batsmen of the Remove gave Rookwood a considerable amount of leather-chasing.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, watching the game sedately through his celebrated eyeglass. "Bai Jove, you fellows, it looks as if Gweyfwiahs is goin' to beat Wookwood, too! Forty for no wickets! They weally are hot stuff!"

"They are!" agreed Tom Merry. "But you never can tell."

"Pewwers Dwake can detect which is goin' to be the winnah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Jack Drake laughed. The assistant of the Baker Street detective did not carry his detective powers to that extent. Drake was watching the match with the keenest interest, all his wishes on the side of his old school, and the success of the Remove batsmen delighted him. But there came a sudden change; in the course of an over, Bob Cherry was bowled by Jimmy Silver, and Hazeldene, succeeding him at the wicket, was caught out by Mornington, and Nugent, the next man in, was stumped. It was one more example of the glorious uncertainty of cricket.

"Thwee down for fortay!" said Arthur Augustus.

Harry Wharton was the next down, beaten by a fast ball from Jimmy Silver. But Vernon-Smith and Squiff kept the game going, while the runs piled up. Smithy fell at last, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who took his place, was dismissed for a single—a dismaying result to the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Hard luck, old bird," said Bob Cherry, as the dusky batsman came out.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh shook his dusky head mournfully, and remarked that the hard-luckfulness was terrific.

The runs went up, and the wickets went down, and eyes began to scan the board anxiously. Greyfriars wanted 104 to tie, 105 to win; and when they were 100 for nine wickets, the excitement was intense. Tom Brown, the New Zealander, was batting, when Peter Todd went in to join him as last man.

"Four to tie, five to win!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Stick to it, Toddy."

"Buck up, Browney!"

The Rookwood field were keenly on the alert. It was, as Arthur Augustus sagely remarked to his comrades, anybody's game now.

The ball came down to Tom Brown, and the New Zealander cut it away, and the batsmen ran. Once, twice, their feet seeming scarcely to touch the pitch; and the ball came whizzing in, straight for the batsman's wicket. Tom Brown rather felt than saw it coming, and he put on a tremendous burst of speed, and his bat clumped home. Crash went the wicket.

There was a breathless hush. But the umpire shook his head.

"Not out!"

Greyfriars breathed again.

"Hundred and two!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll do it yet."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter! Kick him!"

Billy Bunter backed away.

"I say, don't play the goat, you chaps. I—I've got an ache all over, you know, from last night——"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Wharton unsympathetically.

Bunter sniffed.

"There goes Browney's wicket!" he said. "And it serves you jolly well right, Wharton! Perhaps you wish now that you had played me, after all."

"Fathead!"

Billy Bunter was a little too "previous," so to speak; Browney's wicket was not gone. His bat was on the crease after a swift single before the stumps went down, and again the umpire shook his head. The New Zealand junior was taking risks for the runs that were wanted; but he had pulled through again.

"Hundred and three!" breathed Bob Cherry. "And still going strong! Put your beef into it, Toddy!"

Peter had the bowling now, and he handled it well. Jimmy Silver sent down the ball, and the Rookwood field watched like famished wolves for chances. But Peter did not give them any chances. He snicked away the ball for one; and the batsmen changed places.

And there was a buzz among the Greyfriars crowd.

"Hundred and four!" chortled Bob Cherry. "We tie, at any rate."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "One more wun wanted to win, you fellows! Bai Jove! I weally wish I were at the wicket now playin' for Gwey-fwiah; I should weally like to make a suah thing of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Dwake, I see nothin' to cackle at in that wemark—"

Tom Brown stood steadily up to the bowling. All eyes were upon him and Jimmy Silver. There was a feeling that this was going to be the last over of the match—and it proved to be not only the last over, but the last ball.

Jimmy Silver sent it down, hot and hard. But the ready willow met it, and it sailed away. Away went the whizzing leather, with a flight that eye could hardly follow. Peter Todd was starting to run, but Tom Brown waved him back.

There was no need to run. It was a boundary hit, and the batsman knew it. From all Greyfriars came a deep-throated roar:

"Bravo!"

"Good old Greyfrairs!"

And then the green field swarmed with excited juniors, yelling and waving their hats. Greyfriars had won the second match; and that was all that was needed to fill the cup of joy for the Remove to overflowing. The cricket week had been a success!

Harry Wharton and Co. gave their visitors a hearty send-off on the following day. St. Jim's rolled away in their big car, and the brake bore the Rookwooders to the station. With much hand-shaking and waving of caps, the visitors departed; and Greyfriars settled down to the normal once more. Jack Drake was given a still heartier send-off; for all the Removites were aware that it was owing to Ferrers Locke's boy assistant that success and triumph had attended the Greyfriars Cricket Week.

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 7.—SWIMMING



A splendid summer sport is this,
Its joys have oft been written;
It brings delight, and boundless bliss
To every son of Britain.
To rise upon the billow's crest,
To hear its tuneful measure,
Is often voted as the best
And grandest summer pleasure!

Some slackers shirk the icy dip,
The breakers and the billows;
They much prefer to "let it rip,"
And rest upon the pillows.
We know full well the lazy ways
Of Bunter and of Mauly;
Upon the couch they spend their days,
With Dickens or Macaulay!

But Robert Cherry and his clan
Are always keen on swimming;
They bathe each morning, when they can,
And through the waves go skimming.
They love to hear the breakers roar,
And see the great waves leaping;
Whilst lazy slackers by the score
Within their beds are sleeping.

To swimming, healthiest of sports,
We pay our tribute duly;
And every loyal lad supports
This pastime well and truly.
Then "three times three" for the delight
Which swimming sets before us;
All lovers of it will unite
In one whole-hearted chorus!